

**Correspondence from Patrick Harvie MSP on prisoner voting rights 15 June 2017**

**From:** Harvie P (Patrick), MSP  
**Sent:** 15 June 2017 16:04  
**To:** McKelvie C (Christina), MSP  
**Cc:** Equalities - Human Rights Committee  
**Subject:** Prisoners voting

Dear Convenor,

As my party has no member of the EHR Committee I am writing to ask whether you have considered the question of prisoners voting, as part of your work programme.

You will recall that during scrutiny of the legislation for the Independence Referendum this question was debated and several amendments were moved. Having legislative control of the franchise for the referendum forced the parliament to consider an issue which had previously only been debated at Westminster, and this came in the context of an increasingly clear legal view that the blanket prohibition on prisoners voting is not human rights compliant.

We now have greater devolved responsibility for the democratic process, and I believe that alternatives to the blanket ban must be actively considered if further legal challenges are to be avoided. A number of options are available, including resumption of voting rights at the end of a longer sentence, sentencing guidelines dealing with restriction of voting rights, or loss of voting rights for specific categories of offence.

I would be grateful if you could let me know whether this is something your committee would be willing to explore.

Kind regards,

Patrick Harvie

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Patrick Harvie MSP  
Green Group