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By er	mail to:		
Dear	•		

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST 2023/107

On 15 November 2023 you made a request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA) for the following information:

Morning I would like to bring to your attention about the rights to vote in nz prison an why they didn't get this opportunity I would also like to know why voting booth were not available on the day of voting why prison were short of staff were prisoners didn't get to vote before the day like most of us had a option I would like to look into whether prisoner may have put a vote in but not by them as i have family an friends who are in prison thinking the same.an not knowing if there complaints are going through the right people

Prisoners are eligible to vote if they

- have a sentence of imprisonment of fewer than three years,
- are being held on remand, or
- are serving a community-based sentence, such as home detention or probation.

A prisoner that is eligible to vote can exercise their vote by casting a special vote. There is no provision for a friend or family member to exercise the vote on behalf of a prisoner. For a general election, the Electoral Commission arranges for a prison voting team to visit the prison to issue a special vote.

Prisons are a secure environment with their own set of rules which mean that Electoral Commission staff have to work with Corrections staff to make arrangements for eligible prisoners to cast their votes. Prior to the general election, the Electoral Commission liaises with the Department of Corrections to explain the voting process, to get information about prisons that are holding eligible prisoners and the approximate number of eligible prisoners and to get contact details for a Prison Voting Liaison person at each facility.

Prior to the start of voting, the local Returning Officer in the electorate makes contact with the Prison Voting Liaison to make arrangements for a voting team to visit including:

- Possible days and times issuing staff can visit,
- Number of expected eligible sentencing prisoners in the facility,
- Guidance on the visit (clothing, banned items etc),
- Access to a closed room with prison staff supervision,



- How votes will be issued, including how the secrecy of the poll is maintained,
- How the prison will ensure the security of issuing staff.

The number of staff required in the voting team is determined by the estimated number of eligible prisoners within a facility. The number of prison staff needed to facilitate the visit by the voting team is a matter determined by Corrections and is factored into the arrangements for the days and times that the team can visit.

Regarding your question about a person casting a vote for someone other than themselves, this is not allowed. Voting as someone else (personation) or voting more than once (dual voting) is an offence.

Instances of voter fraud are very rare in New Zealand, but the Electoral Commission nevertheless has very thorough processes for detecting and disallowing dual votes and personation.

These checks ensure the accuracy of the official count. More information can be found on our website: https://elections.nz/democracy-in-nz/about-elections/election-integrity/

In the interests of transparency, we release responses to Official Information Act requests every 3 months. We will publish this response with your personal details redacted.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to make a complaint to the Ombudsman if you are not satisfied with the response to your request. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

Martin Rodgers

Director, Voting Services