



Voting Rights Restoration Project

Minnesotans with a felony conviction DO NOT have the right to vote until they have finished all parts of their sentence including any probation, parole or supervised release. *Source: Office of the MN Secretary of State*

Over 51,000 Minnesotans living in our community are not allowed to vote because they have a felony record. When a tax paying, productive Minnesotan is on probation or parole, that person is barred from voting and does not have the right to representation for the entire time they are “on paper” which can be up to 30 years.

The right to vote is critical to a strong and fair democracy. Our country was founded on the principle of no taxation without representation. Voting rights allow people a stake in the community and an opportunity for engagement locally and nationally. Minnesotans on probation or parole are working for wages, paying taxes and supporting their families. Like everyone in our community, they are aware of and affected by social issues and policy debates such as equality, jobs, education, healthcare and housing.

People with criminal convictions in their past are less likely to reoffend if their voting rights are restored. Research studies (Uggen & Manza, 2004) have found that former offenders who vote are half as likely to be re-arrested as those who did not vote. The right to vote promotes community engagement, personal empowerment as well as a positive stake in the future of our community, our State and our Nation.

Restricting voting rights based on criminal history is voter suppression. This type of voter suppression tactic became popular at the end of the Civil War, over 150 years ago. At that time, probation and parole did not exist in Minnesota, so only people in prison were prohibited from voting. Currently in Minnesota, 75% of all felony offenders are not incarcerated and yet they are barred from the basic civil right to vote.

For the past 50 years, every State has had the right to decide voter eligibility for individuals who have a felony conviction. In Vermont and Maine, no one is barred from voting due to criminal history or incarceration status. In Florida and Kentucky, a felony record means a lifetime prohibition on voting. There are fourteen States that restrict the right to vote only if an offender is currently incarcerated. Minnesota could become the fifteenth State if the law is changed.



CALL TO ACTION

We need to pass legislation that restores voting rights to all eligible Minnesotans living in the community. The voting rights restoration bill in the MN House of Representatives (HF 951) has bipartisan support, but the House leadership will not allow a vote on the bill. Help us raise awareness and get this bill to a vote!

Tell your House Representative:

**I support voting rights. Please stamp out voter suppression in Minnesota.
Promote more participation and investment in the democratic process.
Make the law more clear and fair. Resolve to pass HF 951 this year.**

To find your representative: <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/members/hmem.asp>

**More information about how a criminal record
may affect the right to vote is available at
The Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State**

<http://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/register-to-vote/i-have-a-criminal-record/>

ORGANIZING FOR ACTION – SAINT PAUL CHAPTER

To learn more & get involved: <http://ofaminnesota.us/ofa-st-paul/>

Register to vote or help someone register to vote:

<https://www.vote.org/> or

<https://mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/VoterRegistration/VoterRegistrationMain.aspx>