



2/10/2022

Dear Lawmaker,

On behalf of our respective activists and advocates across West Virginia, we encourage you to support Senate Bill 488 and House Bill 4543, eliminating restrictions on voting rights for formerly incarcerated individuals.

This crucial legislation will restore voting rights to formerly incarcerated individuals by eliminating restrictions on voting once an individual is released from incarceration through pardon, probation, parole, or completion of a sentence.

The restoration of voting rights has strong, bipartisan support. Currently, 21 states, including Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Utah, restore voting eligibility for people with felony convictions upon their release from prison. Ensuring people with past convictions can participate in our democracy in a meaningful way is a foundational part of the rehabilitative process.

Research suggests that allowing formerly incarcerated individuals to vote can also reduce recidivism. A study by the Florida Parole Commission found that people with felony convictions whose eligibility was restored were three times less likely to commit new crimes. As a result, more and more law enforcement, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the American Probation and Parole Association, support voting restoration.

For these reasons, we ask you to support SB 488 and House Bill 4543 to ensure that individuals who have served their debt to society are able to regain the fundamental right to participate in our republic and, in doing so, are better empowered to successfully reenter society.

Sincerely,

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