

2013 Caucus Resolution Restoring the Right to Vote

Whereas, approximately 63,000 Minnesotans are denied the right to vote under Minnesota law due to a past felony¹ conviction and 75% of those individuals are living in the community;

Whereas, since 1974, the percentage of voting age Minnesotans disenfranchised as a result of a criminal conviction has increased over 400%;

Whereas, as a result of disproportionate conviction rates, disenfranchisement overwhelmingly affects communities of color – African-Americans make up roughly five percent of the Minnesota population and represent over a quarter of the total number of those disenfranchised and American Indians, less than two percent of the population, account for more than six percent of those individuals who are disenfranchised;

Whereas, involvement in civic life logically results in stronger ties to the community, and research has shown that persons with past criminal convictions are less likely to be arrested again in states that restore voting rights after release from incarceration;

Whereas, a policy that permits all individuals who have served their time in jail or prison to vote reduces confusion among voters and election officials about who can vote, thereby easing election administration and reducing government costs; and

Whereas, thirteen states already disenfranchise only those persons who are currently incarcerated for a felony conviction, not those on probation or parole.

Therefore, be it resolved that the _____ Party supports restoring voting rights to Minnesotans convicted of a felony while they are on probation or parole.

¹ A felony is any crime with a sentence of greater than 1 year.