



MY VOICE, MY VOTE



Restore the vote to community members on probation and parole in Minnesota.

CURRENT LAW Minnesota denies the right to vote for persons on probation, supervised release (parole), or incarcerated for a felony conviction.

THE NUMBERS Over 60,000 Minnesotans would be re-enfranchised by allowing parolees and probationers to vote. Since 1974, the number of individuals disenfranchised as a result of a felony conviction has increased 500%, making Minnesota the fourth highest in the number of individuals per capita who are under community supervision (probation or supervised release). The result is that the majority of individuals currently disenfranchised have never spent time in prison, and 87% of the state's 70,000 disenfranchised live in the community, hold jobs, and pay taxes.

Although disparately impacting persons of color, felon disenfranchisement is an issue that affects all communities in the state (and nation): individuals who identify as Caucasian comprise almost 70% of the convicted felon population in Minnesota, and 1.7% of the state's entire voting-age population were disenfranchised in 2007. Nationally, an estimated 5.3 million Americans are denied the right to vote in federal elections because of state laws that prohibit voting by people with felony convictions. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia allow individuals on probation and parole to vote. Those states include Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, and Vermont.

RACIAL IMPACT 10% of African Americans and 6.5% of American Indians of voting age are disenfranchised in Minnesota. In 2007, almost 17% (nearly 1 in 5) of otherwise eligible voting-age African American males were disenfranchised, reflecting their disproportionate rate of incarceration in the state.

Nationally, 1.4 million African American men (or 13 % of the black adult male population) are disenfranchised, a rate that is seven times the national average and represents more than one-third (36 %) of the total disenfranchised population. Given current rates of incarceration, in the next generation three in ten black men will be disenfranchised at some point in their lifetime.

EMPOWERMENT, PUBLIC SAFETY, & STIGMA REDUCTION Voting is a powerful, concrete, and symbolic way to contribute to one's community. Research shows that probationers and parolees are less likely to recidivate when exercising their right to vote. Following in the footsteps of Connecticut and Rhode Island (two states that recently re-enfranchised a combined 48,000+ residents), the "My Voice, My Vote" campaign seeks to reduce the stigma of a past criminal history by giving voice to the thousands of disenfranchised community members desiring to be a part of the political process in Minnesota.

www.mnsecondchancecoalition.org