



Streamlining Voter Registration for People Released from Prison

Don't people with convictions already have the right to vote?

Yes. In 2001, New Mexico legislators passed a bill that allowed persons with felony convictions the right to vote.

For the past seven years the system has struggled to maintain the records of people with felony convictions who have been restored the right to vote - resulting in the wrongful denial of voter registrations.

What does this legislation propose?

This proposal would streamline interagency communication regarding people who are eligible to register to vote following release from prison, easing the administrative burden and ensuring better data management. People leaving correctional facilities would immediately have the right to vote restored and be eligible to re-register.

This bill will streamline the process of voter registration for people with felony convictions, making it easy for the Secretary of State and County Clerks to determine who is eligible to vote.

Both the New Mexico Corrections Department and the Secretary of State's office support this policy change and feel confident their offices and staff can comply with the new procedures.

How does this legislation help our communities?

By focusing on the successful reintegration of people coming out of jail or prison and welcoming individuals back into our communities, we can facilitate the reentry process and contribute to the success of people with convictions.ⁱ

When people with convictions are allowed to vote they feel connected to their larger community, making choices which affect themselves, their families, and their state.

New Mexico will be joining 13 states that immediately restore the right to vote upon release from incarceration: these 13 states include: Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Washington DC.ⁱⁱ

Streamlining voter registration for people with felony convictions will simplify the current system, saving money and time.

ⁱ "Voting Rights for People With Criminal Records: 2008 State Legislative and Policy Changes." American Civil Liberties Union. (2008). Retrieved October 10, 2008, <http://www.aclu.org/votingrights/exoffenders/statelegispolicy2008.html>