



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

File #: 120757, Version: 0

Commending the efforts of the many organizations and individuals that work to educate and encourage ex-offenders to exercise their right to vote.

WHEREAS, The right to vote is not only fundamental, but also a cornerstone of American democracy; and

WHEREAS, It is important for all individuals eligible to not only register, but to become informed about the issues, and exercise the right to vote; and

WHEREAS, According to the Huffington Post, it is estimated that 5.85 million adults who have been convicted of felonies are disenfranchised at some point during the criminal justice process in forty-eight states and the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, According to the Sentencing Project, thirty-two states prohibit felons from voting while they are on parole and twenty-eight states prohibit felony probationers from voting. Thirteen states permanently disenfranchise some or all ex-felons. Eight states permanently and categorically revoke the right to vote for all offenders, and one state withholds the franchise right from some ex-felons for a period of five years upon completion of their sentence; and

WHEREAS, Only two states, Maine and Vermont allow felons to vote regardless of incarceration status; and

WHEREAS, In Pennsylvania the right to vote is restored upon release from incarceration for most; and

WHEREAS, Many formerly incarcerated individuals are uninformed or misinformed about the restoration of the right to vote upon release; and

WHEREAS, The American Correctional Association, the nation's largest association of correctional professionals, supports the right of ex-offenders to vote upon completion of their sentence and urges correctional agencies to inform inmates nearing their release about their voting rights; and

WHEREAS, The Returning Citizens Voter Movement, a coalition of non-profit organizations and individuals with the common goal of increasing successful reentry and civic engagement amongst formerly incarcerated and convicted people (FICP), has begun a campaign to assist 10,000 former prisoners in registering to vote; and

WHEREAS, It is paramount for elected officials to take action to prevent the disenfranchisement of all vulnerable groups, including ex-offenders; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA, Recognizes, commends, and supports the efforts of the many organizations and individuals that work to educate and encourage ex-offenders to exercise their right to vote.