

## **Resolution to Restore Convict Voting Rights**

WHEREAS the right of citizens of the United States to vote is a fundamental right;

WHEREAS there are more than 2.2 million people incarcerated in federal and state prisons and county jails;

WHEREAS there are approximately 4.7 million people in the United States on probation or parole;

WHEREAS there are currently 48 of these United States and the District of Columbia that strip incarcerated felons of their voting rights;

WHEREAS there are currently 10 of these United States that strip incarcerated misdemeanants of their voting rights;

WHEREAS many of the 48 of these United States also strip felons who have been released from prison of their voting rights under a variety of conditions;

WHEREAS certain racial and socioeconomic segments of the population are disproportionately disenfranchised by such laws;

WHEREAS prisoners are counted for census purposes as residents of the community where the prison is located rather than as residents of the communities from which they hail;

WHEREAS the vast majority of prisoners hail from a small number of communities which are far removed from the community in which the prison in which they are incarcerated is located;

WHEREAS communities that contain prisons enjoy more representation in government than that to which they are entitled;

WHEREAS communities from which prisoners are relocated suffer from diminished representation in government than that to which they are entitled;

WHEREAS such laws provide incentives to distort the justice system to criminalize otherwise innocuous behavior for reasons other than criminal justice;

WHEREAS such laws provide incentives to distort the justice system to systematically convict vulnerable members of society for reasons other than criminal justice;

WHEREAS deprivation of this fundamental right does little if anything to further the goals of rehabilitation, incapacitation, deterrence or retribution;

WHEREAS Maine and Vermont allow prisoners to vote and Massachusetts and Utah allowed prisoners to vote until 2000 and 1998, respectively; and

WHEREAS Puerto Rico, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Sweden and Zimbabwe allow prisoners to vote; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Libertarian Party of New York

1. Urges the New York State Legislature to restore forthwith the voting rights of all citizens convicted of crimes unrelated to the elective franchise, be they incarcerated, on probation or on parole;
2. Urges all state legislatures of these United States that currently disenfranchise citizens convicted of crimes unrelated to the elective franchise to restore forthwith the voting rights of all such citizens, be they incarcerated, on probation or on parole;
3. Urges the United States Congress to restore forthwith the voting rights of all citizens convicted of crimes unrelated to the elective franchise in the District of Columbia, be they incarcerated, on probation or on parole; and
4. Urges the United States Congress to restore forthwith the rights of all citizens convicted of crimes unrelated to the elective franchise in the United States to vote in federal elections, be they incarcerated, on probation or on parole.

Original movant: Aaron Commey

Special Resolution Committee:

Aaron Commey, Chair

Michael McDermott

Ed Garret

Blay Tarnoff