



The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 4, 2019

RE: Broad coalition endorses Democracy Restoration Act and voting rights restoration for all people with felony convictions

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

The Justice Roundtable¹ and the undersigned associated organizations urge the House of Representatives to support the Democracy Restoration Act and oppose all amendments and a motion to recommit to this provision within H.R. 1, the For the People Act of 2019.

People living in the community after completing their term of imprisonment should have an opportunity to participate fully in community life by working, raising families and voting. Voting promotes social responsibility and community engagement - all important aspects of successful reintegration after incarceration.

While disenfranchisement policies have been in place for many years, the number of people impacted has increased dramatically with the expansion of the criminal justice system over the last 40 years. **An estimated 6.1 million citizens in 2016 were unable to vote in federal elections.** Racial disparities in the criminal justice system also translate into higher rates of disenfranchisement in communities of color. Thirty-four states disenfranchise people **who are not incarcerated** and are living in their communities either under supervision or have completed a felony sentence. The Democracy Restoration Act would restore federal voting eligibility to these citizens.

Law enforcement officials support the restoration of voting rights for people released from prison because **it aids successful reintegration.** According to the American Probation and Parole Association, felony disenfranchisement is not based on a need to protect the integrity of the electoral process and the justice system; and it works against the successful reentry of people leaving incarceration.

We urge the House of Representatives to pass the Democracy Restoration Act without amendment as part of H.R. 1.

For questions, please contact Kara Gotsch at kgotsch@sentencingproject.org or 202-628-0871.

Sincerely,

American Friends Service Committee
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Campaign for Youth Justice
CANDO Clemency Foundation
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Church of Scientology National Affairs Office
CURE (Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants)
The Daniel Initiative
Demos
Drug Policy Alliance
The Episcopal Church
FedCURE
Human Rights Watch
Innocence Project
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Justice Innovations
Justice Programs Office, American University
Justice Strategies
JustLeadership USA
League of Women Voters of the United States
Legal Action Center
Million Hoodies Movement for Justice
NAACP
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
National Action Network
National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
National Association of Social Workers
National Council of Churches
National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)
National HIRE Network
National Juvenile Justice Network
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Urban League
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
People For the American Way
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Pretrial Justice Institute
Prison Policy Initiative
Safer Foundation
The Sentencing Project
StoptheDrugWar.org
The Taifa Group
Treatment Communities of America

T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association

Cc: Members of U.S. House of Representatives

ⁱ The Justice Roundtable is a coalition of over 100 organizations working on federal criminal justice reform policy issues.