



Testimony of Mr. Ryan E. Hamilton in Support of H.F. 28 (Frazier) - Right to Vote Restored
House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee
January 19, 2023

Chair Moller and Members of the Committee:

The Minnesota Catholic Conference (MCC), the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Minnesota, is proud to be a part of the Restore the Vote Coalition and would like to express our support for Representative Frazier's H.F. 28.

Pope Francis has said, "where there is no mercy, there is no justice". The Catholic Church has consistently advocated for responses to crime that do not simply punish, but also rehabilitate and restore. We must ask whether disenfranchising felons—after the courts have allowed them to return to their families and work in their communities—serves any positive criminal justice purpose? Or is it merely punishment for punishment's sake?

There is no doubt that justice-involved individuals face significant collateral consequences once they leave jail or prison. The inability to vote and have a say in the public decisions that affect their families is just another stumbling block for those trying to reconcile themselves to their communities. The restoration of voting rights is a meaningful step towards giving people genuine chances to forge new pathways in their lives.

Catholics believe every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future. Offering a second chance to justice-involved individuals serves the common good of all Minnesotans. Please vote "Aye" on favorable passage of H.F. 28.

Thank you for your service to the people of Minnesota.