

January 10, 2023

**On behalf of over 18,000 multipartisan members across the state we ask for your support and “yes” vote on HF28. Disenfranchisement does little to offset recidivism.**

Despite belonging to various MN party affiliations, or not being affiliated, the one thing they’ve come together to do is support our work ensuring our Republic’s democracy is safeguarded, our elections continue to reflect the will of Minnesotans and everyone’s vote counts.

To be clear, a felony disenfranchisement law is “race neutral” on its face. However, historically, the U.S. and Minnesota has had a documented biased criminal justice system in which race is tied to criminal punishment. The historical incarceration rate for same/similar crimes based on race/ethnicity speaks for itself. Seemingly racially neutral laws can be selectively enforced by a nearly all white criminal justice system. Disenfranchisement laws have a racially tainted legacy that calls into question whether these laws would exist if not for the granting of voting rights to black people and the abolition of slavery.

Additionally, in Minnesota districts that contain prison facilities can count incarcerated people for redistricting purposes. The practice of prison gerrymandering gives an unfair advantage to districts where prison facilities are located and dilutes the voting power of communities where incarcerated people have their primary addresses — all while incarcerated people are denied the right to vote. These districts are majority white and rural. They are benefiting from the presence of incarcerated people, while those incarcerated are denied the vote after their released, denied responsive representation and are taxed.

### **Restore The Vote**

- HF28 restores the civil right to vote to individuals who have been convicted of a felony upon completion of any incarceration imposed.
- It does away with the imposed taxation without representation.
- It reinforces reintegration into community
- It affords opportunity for responsive representation for electeds
- Creates appropriate process to educate, inform and enable key players to ensure compliance with the provisions of HF28.
- Requires updates to the voter registration application to reflect the change in the restoration of the civil right to vote provided by HF28. Also, it requires the Office of the Secretary of State to prepare a publication that describes the voting rights of falling within the scope of HF28.

Thank you for your hard work and support of HF28. We look forward to working with this body to move meaningful people-focused redistricting reforms that will also address the problems of prison gerrymandering mentioned above.

*Annastacia Belladonna-Carrera*

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