



January 18, 2023

Members of the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee
Via Electronic Delivery

Re: Letter in Support of the Restore the Vote Act, H.F. 28

Dear Members of the Committee:

The Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA) submits this letter to express our support for the Restore the Vote Act - HF 28/SF 26. MNCASA is a statewide membership coalition driving transformative culture change to address sexual violence through advocacy, prevention, racial justice, and systems change. MNCASA acts as a collective voice of organizations and individuals committed to ending sexual violence.

MNCASA supports the restoration of voting rights for individuals convicted of a felony upon completion of their incarceration. Our member programs serve formerly incarcerated people who have been victims/survivors of sexual violence and sex trafficking. Many were convicted of felonies related to that violence, such as prostitution-related crimes or assault in self-defense. The criminalization of victims/survivors of sexual violence for crimes related to their victimization is a profound injustice. All victims/survivors deserve to use their voices freely at the ballot box.

Restoring voting rights for formerly incarcerated individuals is also a violence prevention strategy. The level of support, connection, and community integration formerly incarcerated people experience upon release is critical in determining whether or not they are likely to reoffend. Taking away a formerly incarcerated person's ability to have a voice at the ballot box only further isolates them. When people can engage in civic responsibilities such as voting, they are able to become more connected to their communities, which in turn helps them to build relationships and establish strong support structures.

People living in a community should expect to have a role and a voice in issues that impact their community and their life, and formerly incarcerated victims/survivors of violence deserve to be heard at the ballot box. We urge you to restore their rights— please vote yes on House File 28.

In Community,

Artika Roller
Executive Director, MNCASA

Sarah Florman
Public Policy Manager, MNCASA

161 Saint Anthony Avenue
Suite 1001
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103

www.mncasa.org
651-209-9999
info@mncasa.org

161 Saint Anthony Avenue
Suite 1001
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103

www.mncasa.org
651-209-9999
info@mncasa.org

161 Saint Anthony Avenue
Suite 1001
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103

www.mncasa.org
651-209-9999
info@mncasa.org