Voting Rights Restoration

Call To Action Goal (Colorado)

The call to action is to convince the Colorado state legislature to pass legislation that restores voting rights to individuals deprived of those rights because they are on parole. Currently, Colorado law deprives these individuals of their voting rights even as they are working to successfully reintegrate within Colorado communities.

After the 2018 legislative session, we will launch an additional element of the campaign designed to secure clear policies and protocols that facilitate registration and voting for detained individuals who, under current Colorado law, are eligible to vote, yet face significant obstacles in doing so.

Call To Action Plan (Colorado)

To get acquainted with the Let People Vote call to action for Colorado, People Power volunteers/activists will:

- watch the livestream/recording of the October 1, 2017 Let People Vote launch event;
- review and discuss background materials on voting rights restoration; and
- identify their state legislators with whom they will engage on this call to action.

In the coming months, People Power activists/volunteers will work in partnership with the ACLU of Colorado and partner organizations to achieve our goal of voter restoration. The ACLU of Colorado and partner organizations will periodically post important events, such as supplemental training opportunities, at www.map.peoplepower.org, and you will be invited to attend via email, text message and/or phone call.

In the coming months, People Power activists/volunteers will also be able to work independently with their teams and other teams to:

- meet with elected officials and their staff, gather and deliver petition signatures, speak out at public meetings and town halls, organize protests, make phone calls, and send letters, in order to:
  ○ urge their state lawmakers to pass voter restoration legislation;
  ○ urge their local officials, in particular county clerks, to release public statements in support of voter restoration;
- submit Letters to the Editor (LTEs) to local newspapers, stressing the need to ease access to the ballot for returning citizens in Colorado;
- gather petition signatures in high-traffic public locations and at local events like farmers’ markets, as well as canvass for these signatures by going door-to-door in your neighborhood discussing the importance of voter restoration with members in your community;
- Starting in 2018, urge local officials, county clerks and jail officials, to adopt policies and protocols that facilitate jail based registration and voting for individuals who remain eligible to vote, through meeting with elected officials and their staff, gathering and delivering petition signatures, speaking out at public meetings and town halls, organizing protests, making phone calls, and sending letters (ideally, these policies and protocols would come in the form of Memorandums of Understanding, MOUs);
- Starting in 2018, participate in voter registration assistance sessions within detention facilities to register eligible voters; and
- take other actions to promote voter restoration and voting rights, as determined by their People Power teams.

Take action TODAY!

Sign up to attend an upcoming event here. Sign up to host your own event here.
Background

In many states, individuals with prior criminal convictions are deprived of the right to vote, and while options may exist to restore their voting rights, those procedures and eligibility requirements are often very onerous. Many of these rights deprivations originated in the Jim Crow era to disenfranchise African-Americans. Today more than 6 million U.S. citizens lack voting rights due to prior convictions – more than a third are black. Most of this population is no longer incarcerated. These people, our families, friends, neighbors, are living, working and raising families in our communities, yet lack access to the ballot. 16 states and the District of Columbia immediately grant the right to vote to all citizens who have been released from prison, and states like Vermont and Maine never strip incarcerated individuals of the vote. We must broaden these policies.

Key Reasons to Support Voting Rights Restoration

Democracy: To sustain a strong, vibrant democracy, we need the participation of the broadest possible base of voters. The history of this nation is one in which we have progressively expanded the right to vote, which has made the nation stronger.

Fairness: Governments make decisions that impact the lives and prospects of individuals with prior criminal convictions (e.g. whether such persons can access public housing). Individuals affected by these decisions ought to be able to influence them.

Challenge Historic Racism: Disenfranchisement laws have a distinct place in the history of repressive laws meant to disadvantage racial minorities. Eliminating them would help turn the page decisively on unfortunate chapters in U.S. history.

Community Reintegration: Through reengaging in civic life, individuals can reestablish ties to the broader population and contribute more to economic and social progress. Individuals can become full stakeholders in their communities, which improves public safety.

For questions, feel free to contact us at info@peoplepower.org.

www.peoplepower.org