

Fairfax County Democratic Committee Resolution Regarding Voting Rights for Ex-Felons in Virginia

Whereas, over 300,000 Virginians currently cannot vote because they have felony convictions, and their right to vote has not been restored by the Governor of Virginia,

Whereas, one out of every five African-American males in the Commonwealth of Virginia cannot vote because of the Virginia Constitutional provision prohibiting persons with felony convictions to vote unless restored by the Governor,

Whereas, only Virginia and Kentucky require an act of the Governor to restore rights instead of some form of automatic restoration which is practiced by the 48 other states,

Whereas, the Governor of Virginia has the sole authority to act on this matter,

Whereas, with a stroke of his pen the Governor by Executive Order could restore the right to vote for ex-felons who have completed their sentences,

Whereas, there are no clear standards for the restoration of voting rights, and no law dictating the process by which the Governor may choose to restore rights,

Whereas, the best way for persons who have served their sentences to be re-integrated into society is to give them all rights and responsibilities as a citizen, including most importantly the right to participate in the political process and to cast a ballot to elect their leaders,

Whereas, felon disenfranchisement is a relic of the Jim Crow era, instituted along with the poll tax and literacy tests explicitly to protect the white vote,

Whereas, numerous individuals and organizations throughout the Commonwealth have urged Governor Kaine to take action,

Therefore, be it resolved that the FCDC urges Governor Tim Kaine to issue an Executive Order restoring the vote for current ex-felons who have completed the terms of their sentences, and that the Committee urges all members to call the Governor's Office at 804-786-2211 to ask him to issue said Executive Order, before he leaves office on January 16th, 2010.

Enacted by vote of the Committee this 5th day of January, 2010.