



Voting Rights Restoration

Call To Action Goal (Kentucky)

The call to action is to amend the Kentucky constitution to permit the majority of Kentuckians with prior criminal convictions to regain the right to vote upon completion of their sentence. As it stands now, if a Kentuckian is convicted of any felony – with rare exceptions involving the Governor’s pardon authorities – they lose the right to vote permanently. Kentucky is one of just a handful of states that maintains this harsh penalty.

To place the amendment on the 2018 ballot, the Kentucky General Assembly must pass a bill during the 2018 legislative session. Updating the law would pave the way for over 170,000 Kentuckians to have their voting rights restored.

Call To Action Plan (Kentucky)

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

- watch the livestream/recording of the October 1, 2017 Let People Vote launch event; and
- review and discuss [background materials](#) on voter restoration in Kentucky.

In the coming months, People Power activists/volunteers will work in partnership with the ACLU of Kentucky and coalition partners like Kentuckians For The Commonwealth (www.kftc.org) to achieve our goal of voter restoration. The ACLU of Kentucky and partner organizations will periodically post important events, such as the Day of Empathy, an Advocacy Day at the Capitol in March 2018, 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:
 - o urge their state lawmakers to [express support](#) for restoration of voting rights, and to pass a voter restoration bill during the 2018 legislative session (visit www.lrc.ky.gov to look up your lawmakers and learn more about them);
 - o urge their city councils and county boards to adopt local resolutions in support of rights restoration;
 - o urge Governor Bevin to use his existing powers to restore voting rights to Kentuckians through the partial pardon process, while we work to permanently change the law;
- organize and participate in [community education and outreach events](#) to broaden awareness about the 200,000 Kentuckians who have been deprived of the right to vote;
- [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;
- submit [Letters to the Editor \(LTEs\)](#) to local newspapers, stressing the need for rights restoration;
- work with partner organizations to help individuals who have lost the right to vote as a result of a felony conviction apply to have their voting rights restored through the partial pardon process, while we work to permanently change the law; and

- take other actions to promote voter restoration and voting rights more broadly, 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