



## **Summary: Components of a Right to Vote Bill As of July 2005**

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Right to Vote legislation should contain several provisions. An advocate reviewing a state's law on the restoration of voting rights to people with criminal convictions should look for each of the components listed below. Piecemeal improvements may be possible in states where more comprehensive legislation is impossible or unnecessary.

- **Restoration of Rights:** This provision should clearly identify at what point voting rights are restored to people with criminal convictions – upon discharge from prison? upon completion of parole? upon completion of parole or probation? upon completion of sentence plus a waiting period?
- **Notice:** This provision should ensure that criminal defendants are informed: (1) before conviction and sentencing, that they will lose their voting rights; and (2) at the point of restoration, that they are again eligible to register and vote.
- **Voter Registration:** Under this provision, the government agency that has contact with people at the point of restoration (the Department of Corrections, or the Department of Parole or Probation, for example) should take responsibility for assisting them with voluntary voter registration.
- **Maintaining the Statewide Voter Registration Database:** This provision should ensure that names are removed from and then restored to the state's computerized list of registered voters by electronic information-sharing between corrections agencies and elections agencies.
- **Education:** This section should make the state's chief election official, usually the secretary of state, responsible for educating other government agencies and the public about the legislation.