

**LETTER IN SUPPORT OF
THE DEMOCRACY RESTORATION ACT (H.R. 3335 / S. 1516)
FROM RELIGIOUS LEADERS**

December 10, 2009

Dear Member of Congress:

We, the undersigned religious leaders, reflecting diverse faith traditions, in one voice write to urge you to support and co-sponsor the Democracy Restoration Act, a bill which seeks to restore federal voting rights to millions of Americans living and working in our communities who have been disenfranchised because of a criminal conviction in their past. As people of faith, we believe all people are created in God's image. We are deeply concerned that state disenfranchisement laws continue to deprive our neighbors of their fundamental right to vote and relegate them to second-class citizenship.

From Joseph saving untold numbers from famine, to Peter being the rock upon which Christ's church was built, our scriptures bear powerful witness of the great achievements that can be made by persons who have spent time in prison. It is consistent with the best of our democratic values and our moral heritage to encourage former prisoners to participate constructively with their communities in ways such as voting.

Accordingly, we join the many Americans who believe that continuing to deny the franchise to millions of our fellow citizens who have rejoined our communities is unwise and unjust. Our support for the Democracy Restoration Act rests squarely on our obligation to be merciful and forgiving, our commitment to treat others with the respect and dignity that God's children deserve, and our steadfast belief in the human capacity for redemption.

We applaud your efforts to restore the franchise to persons who have been released from prison, and we urge you to pass the Democracy Restoration Act.

Yours truly,

The Aleph Institute

Crossroad Bible Institute

American Friends Service Committee

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Billy Graham Center, Institute for
Prison Ministries

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Church of Scientology

Holistic Opportunity for Personal
Empowerment (HOPE)

Interfaith Drug Prevention Initiative

Jewish Reconstructionist Federation

Mennonite Central Committee, Washington Office

National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

National Alliance of Faith and Justice

The National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Churches in the USA

NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America

Prison Fellowship

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office

Protestants for the Common Good

Restorative Justice Ministries Network of North America

Sojourners

Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society