LETTER IN SUPPORT OF
THE DEMOCRACY RESTORATION ACT
FROM RELIGIOUS AND FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

December 16, 2011

Dear Member of Congress:

We, the undersigned religious organizations, 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, an organization for Jewish renewal
Christian Reformed Church of North America
Crossroad Bible Institute
Evangelicals for Social Action
The Institute for Prison Ministries at the Billy Graham Center
Masjid An-Nur, an Islamic center in Minneapolis, MN
Mennonite Central Committee
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Presbyterian Church USA, Office of Public Witness, Washington, DC
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
Restorative Justice Ministries Network of North America
Sojourners, a Christian ministry based in Washington, DC
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations