



# American Probation and Parole Association

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## Resolution Supporting Restoration of Voting Rights Released

The American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) has released a new resolution calling for the restoration of voting rights upon completion of an offender's prison sentence and advocates no loss of voting rights while on community supervision. The resolution was passed by APPA's Board of Directors in September 2007.

Voting is an integral part of community participation in democratic societies and is one of vital importance in building truly representative governments. When large sectors of the population are prevented from voting, a democracy cannot function as it should.

These facts are cited by The Sentencing Project<sup>1</sup> and underline some of the reasoning behind APPA's current stance on the issue:

- 48 states and the District of Columbia prohibit inmates from voting while incarcerated for a felony offense.
- Only two states - Maine and Vermont - permit inmates to vote.
- 35 states prohibit felons from voting while they are on parole and 30 of these states exclude felony probationers as well.
- Two states deny the right to vote to all ex-offenders who have completed their sentences. Nine others disenfranchise certain categories of ex-offenders and/or permit application for restoration of rights for specified offenses after a waiting period (e.g., five years in Delaware and Wyoming, and two years in Nebraska).
- Each state has developed its own process of restoring voting rights to ex-offenders but most of these restoration processes are so cumbersome that few ex-offenders are able to take advantage of them.

As a result:

- An estimated 5.3 million Americans, or one in forty-one adults, have currently or permanently lost their voting rights as a result of a felony conviction.

APPA's resolution is as follows:

WHEREAS, many citizens who have been convicted of felonies and have completed their sentences, including community supervision, do not have the right to vote; and

WHEREAS, many states have some restrictions on voting privileges for felons; and

WHEREAS, the loss of the right to vote is not based on a need to protect the integrity of the electoral process and the justice system; and

WHEREAS, disenfranchisement of felons is disproportionately affecting an increasingly large segment of the population and their families; and

WHEREAS, disenfranchisement laws work against the successful reentry of offenders;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the American Probation and Parole Association advocates the restoration of voting rights upon completion of an offender's prison sentence and advocates no loss of voting rights while on community supervision.

For questions regarding APPA's resolution, please contact Diane Kincaid at (859) 244-8196 or [dkincaid@csg.org](mailto:dkincaid@csg.org).

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.sentencingproject.org/Admin%5CDocuments%5Cpublications%5Cfd\\_bs\\_fdlawsinus.pdf](http://www.sentencingproject.org/Admin%5CDocuments%5Cpublications%5Cfd_bs_fdlawsinus.pdf)