

Nebraska Lawmakers Pass Bill to Restore Voting Rights Immediately Upon Completion of Sentence for Past Criminal Conviction

Legislation Now Awaiting Governor's Signature

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Lincoln, NE – The Nebraska Legislature passed a bill today that would restore voting rights to approximately 7,000 citizens who cannot vote because of a criminal conviction in their past. Under the law, the governor has until Saturday, April 29th to sign or veto the measure.

Under current Nebraska law, citizens who have successfully completed a sentence for a felony conviction must wait two years before their rights are restored. [Nebraska Legislative Bill 75](#), introduced by Sen. Justin Wayne, would modify this statute to eliminate that two-year waiting period. The bill passed with a large margin in the state's non-partisan unicameral legislature, and now heads to Gov. Pete Ricketts for his signature.

“We are grateful for the leadership of Senator Justin Wayne in bringing this legislation and for the 26 senators that joined him in extending the right to vote to over 7,000 Nebraskans,” said **Bri McLarty Huppert, director of voting rights at Nebraskans for Civic Reform**. “We are thrilled that those impacted individuals currently living and working in our communities will have their voice and their vote restored.”

“This is a victory for voting rights,” said **Danielle Conrad, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Nebraska**. “This is a victory for racial justice. Ending the needless and confusing two-year waiting period for citizens with a conviction history will ensure more diverse voices are heard in our democracy. It will allow more Nebraskans to fully reintegrate into our neighborhoods and make a positive impact in our communities.”

“This bill would give Nebraskans a second chance to fully participate in the communities where they live and work,” said **Myrna Pérez, deputy director of the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice**. “A key part of that is being able to exercise the most fundamental right in American democracy. Today's move by the legislature is a key first step, and we're hopeful the governor will make it the law of the state.”

The Nebraska bill builds on recent bipartisan support for rights restoration around the country. This year in neighboring Wyoming, the state enacted a law establishing automatic voting rights restoration for certain citizens with past criminal convictions. In January, Virginia's governor announced that he restored voting rights to 140,000 citizens while vowing to continue doing so for thousands more. In 2016, Maryland's legislature enfranchised more than 40,000 people, and Delaware removed financial barriers to rights restoration. In the last 20 years, more than 20 states have made it easier for people with past convictions to vote, vote sooner, or access the right to vote more easily.