



creating a more modern and robust
democracy for all Nebraskans.

Case Study: Florida

Recidivism & Voting Rights

A unique data set

Discussing the relationship between voting rights and recidivism (return to prison) is often difficult due to a lack of comparable data. In 2011, the Florida Parole Board commissioned a report on the recidivism rates of individuals who had their voting right restored. The report focused on recidivism rates between 2009-2011. Comparing this data to Florida Department of Corrections report analyzing the overall recidivism rate gives us a uniquely useful data set to discuss, quantitatively, the correlation between voting rights and recidivism.

A dramatic difference

The Florida Department of Corrections measures the three-year recidivism rate, meaning the return to prison within three years of release. The three-year recidivism rate for all Floridians consistently hovers around 25%. Between 2009-2011 specifically, the average three-year recidivism rate was 26%.¹ **The 2009-2011 three-year recidivism rate for Floridians who had their voting rights restored was 4.5%, less than one fifth of the overall average.**²

Three-year recidivism rates³

Entire population (2009-2011)
26%

Those with voting rights restored (2009-2011)
4.5%

Restoring voting rights promotes public safety

Leadership for the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), a professional association for law enforcement worldwide that supports members in all aspects of their professional responsibilities to advance more effective policing, has long recognized civil rights restoration upon completion of sentence as an important element of a larger strategy to reduce recidivism by promoting successful re-entry into society, thereby advancing public safety interests.⁴

The only available evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, indicate that restoring voting rights encourages pro-social behavior, and discourages the recommission of crimes.⁵ This is an important issue not only for the civic health of our state, but also for public safety.

1. Report from Florida Department of Corrections, "Florida Prison Recidivism Report: Releases from 2010 to 2016". August 2018. Page 2.

2. Report from Florida Parole Commission, "Collection of Statistics and Evaluation of Clemency Action". June 2011. Page 12.

3. Florida Department of Corrections defines recidivism as a return to prison, as the result of either a new conviction or a violation of post-prison supervision.

4. Quoted from Schlakman, M. and McNeil, and Sancho, I. "Here's what you haven't heard about restoring ex-felons voting rights: Analysis". *Orlando Sentinel*. October 8, 2018.

5. Hamilton-Smith, G. and Vogel, M. "The Violence of Voicelessness: The Impact of Felony Disenfranchisement on Recidivism." *Berkeley La Raza Law Journal*. 22:3. 2012.