



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 78

Resolution calling on the New York State Assembly to pass A.4830, the New York State Senate to introduce similar legislation, and the Governor to sign such legislation, which requires ex-felons to be fully informed of their voting rights.

By Council Members Williams, Mendez, Rosenthal and Reynoso

Whereas, The right to vote in open and free elections is one of our country's greatest tenets of citizenship, a privilege that is protected in the United States ("U.S.") Constitution; and

Whereas, According to the Sentencing Project, a criminal justice advocacy group, every U.S. state, with the exceptions of Maine and Vermont, bars incarcerated individuals from voting while in prison; and

Whereas, In New York State, individuals on parole for a felony conviction are also banned from voting until they have completed their parole, unless the individual has been granted a Certificate of Relief or Certificate of Good Conduct; and

Whereas, According to the New York State Commission of Correction, as of September 30th of 2013, there were 83,766 inmates in New York State correctional facilities; and

Whereas, Although an individual regains the right to vote upon completion of his or her sentence, it is the responsibility of the newly-freed individual to re-register to vote; and

Whereas, Unfortunately, a significant number of incarcerated individuals are misinformed or uninformed about their voting rights; and

Whereas, According to the Sentencing Project, over 40 percent of prisoners believe that incarceration results in the permanent revocation of voting rights and over 60 percent believe that probation results in the suspension of voting rights; and

Whereas, In order to avoid the disenfranchisement of thousands of people, it is imperative that individuals who have served out their sentences be informed of their right to vote in New York State; and

Whereas, A.4830, sponsored by Assembly Member N. Nick Perry and currently pending in the New York State Assembly, seeks to amend the New York State Executive Law by requiring the State Board of Parole to notify inmates convicted of a felony, thirty days prior to their completion of their maximum sentence, that their right to vote will be restored upon their release; and

Whereas, A.4830 would require the State Board of Parole to notify individuals discharged from parole that their right to vote has been restored; and

Whereas, A.4830 would amend the New York State Election Law by requiring the New York State Board of Elections to provide the State Board of Parole with a sufficient number of voter registration and enrollment forms, which will then be given to soon-to-be released inmates and those individuals discharged from parole; and

Whereas, Voting in elections is a key ingredient of civil participation, and one that must be encouraged among all eligible New Yorkers; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Assembly to pass A.4830, the New York State Senate to introduce similar legislation, and the Governor to sign such legislation, which requires ex-felons to be fully informed of their voting rights.

WJH
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