

# Why ex-felons are still excluded from voting in the state of florida?

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



This paper will serve as a mini-proposal for a qualitative study. The goal will be to establish the reasons why ex-felons are still excluded from voting even after serving their time. In other words, the researcher will attempt to gather elements supporting or rejecting the concept of disenfranchisement also known as disfranchisement. First of all, there will be a brief history and discussion of the research problem followed by research questions (qualitative). Then, the appropriate research method will be analyzed including its strengths and weaknesses.

Citizens from the majority of states in America (United States) generally lose their right to vote once they are convicted of a felony crime. Thirteen of them (states) systematically allow those citizens to have their rights reestablish once they get released from prison. Only four (states) permit the restoration of this right after completion of parole while twenty (states) maintain the exclusion of those with felony convictions from voting if they hold a probation status. Eleven states, even when ex-felons complete their time, impose them to petition to have their rights restored. Florida is one of the three states that require all ex-felons convicted of a felony offense to file a petition to the Florida Board of Executive Clemency.

Moreover, ever since its publication in 1838, a law from the Constitution of Florida clearly excludes any felon or mentally incompetent person from exercising his/her right to vote until they are cleared. In Florida, currently, close to 1.5 million ex-felons cannot vote, cannot sit on a jury, cannot hold public office, or possess a firearm. Convicted felons need to wait five to seven years after completing their sentence to properly submit the request

to the Florida Board of Executive Clemency. After submitting their request, only a governor assisted by two members of the Cabinet will either allow full or conditional pardons to felons, change their punishment, or restore their civil rights. At this point, the Governor will use his discretion to either restore the right to vote to some ex-offenders, or refuting that right to others (Heath, 2017). Nevertheless, this process remains long, hard, challenging, and even impossible to achieve .

Some people consider voting as a right whereas the authorities clearly establishes it as a privilege. In fact, most Americans enjoy their right to vote; but, more than five million adults in the USA are deprived from that right due to felony convictions. In the case *McLaughlin vs. City of Canton* (1995), Judge Wingate stated that in a democratic society, disenfranchisement is one of the cruelest form of civil sanctions. Disenfranchisement forbids former offenders from taking full advantage of their civic and political life. Some states ban convicted felons from serving as jury members, or impede their eligibility to hold a number of occupational licenses. Therefore, it is important to understand that disenfranchisement negatively impacts convicted felons' life.