

Example of report on can felons vote

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Currently, approximately close to 5 million citizens of the United States that represent close to 2 percent of the United States population is denied the right to vote because of felony conviction. Among all democratic nations, the U. S has the most limiting laws in this font amongst all major democracies in the world. Democratic nations such as New Zealand, Denmark Israel, South Africa, Finland among others give right of voting to felons upon completion of the sentence. In my view, denying the vote to ex-offenders is antidemocratic and compromising to the values of freedom and self-determination. Upon completing their prison sentence, felons have paid their debt to the society. This paper calls for the repeal of this outrageous and discriminative law. First, felon disenfranchisement laws have a racial undertone that takes the nation back to the old days of limited rights of freedom amongst sub class of the American society. As of 2004 close to 15 percent of black men's, right to vote was taken away because of felony. The black men's average is seven times the national average. This means that if clearly analyzed, disfranchising felons is almost equal to slowly taking away the rights of black men to vote. As of 2005, 20 million Americans were in federal, state county prisons. Although black men are only 6 percent of the U. S population, they constitute 40 percent of the prison population (Fortunate, 2006). Is the United States ready to take this route again?

In the United States, 35 states limits ex prisoners from participating in voting citing several reasons. Although the proper guidelines vary from state to state, it is pretty uniform in the sense that there is some consensus on limiting ex felonies from voting unless they go through some of sort of clemency. There are states in the in the United States that fully forbid felons

from voting without the offer of clemency. In the state of New York, felons that are still on parole are not granted the right to vote if they are still on parole. However, felons on probation in the state of New York can vote. In some states like Wyoming, felons are required to reapply for restoration of the voting right. The state has the right to deny or grant the voting right even after the felon as requested for the right to vote.

In the United States, Maine and Vermont are the only states in the United States that allow incarcerated felons to vote. Massachusetts and Utah took away voting rights in 2000 and 1998 in that order. Alabama, Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nevada, Tennessee, Washington, and Wyoming eternally disfranchised felons unless the felons have gone through reinstatement process. Maryland and Arizona permanently disenfranchised people with more than two felony convictions. Delaware requires a waiting period before a felon is reinstated for voting. New Mexico permanently disenfranchised felons. Maryland narrows the voting rights for felons on the year 2002 (Uggen&Manza, 2002). Still, arguments of democratic ideals challenge the notion that states can restricts individual rights of voting on the accounts of their behavior.

Uggen & Manza (2002) argued that recent analysis show that felon disfranchisement played a decisive role in the U. S. elections in recent years. Moreover, at least one republican presidential victory would have been reversed if former felons had been allowed to vote, and at least one democratic presidential victory would have jeopardized had contemporary rates of disfranchisement prevailed during this time. It is this role of felons on the outcome of elections that has raised the interest on whether pilots

should be accorded the rights to vote or not. Had Florida State Katherine Harris not removed suspected felons from the voting registers, the number of eligible voters would have increased thus bestowing victory to Al Gore over George Bush in the year 2000. In practice, Ms. Harris removed approximately, 47, 000 voters whom she claimed were felons. Later on, Miami Herald discovered that 2, 100 were listed in error (The New York Times, July 21, 2004).

Although highly debatable, the idea of felon disenfranchisement is a compromising to democracy. Opponents of state disenfranchisement laws propose the argument the disenfranchisement challenge the constitution by Violating Rights Act of the United States constitution. Under this rule, disenfranchisement disregards the fourteenth amendment of equal rights of people and has undertones of discrimination because of its impact on racial minorities. Disenfranchisement has a disproportionate impact on the outcome of the election as seen on the case of Florida 2000 (Miles, 2004). Interestingly, the controversy on felon's rights to vote takes political debates to partisan politics. While democrats are favorable to granting felons the right to vote, Republicans are conservative on the effects of granting felons the right to vote. According to polls, felons are more likely to be affiliated to the Democratic Party instead of the Republican Party. There are reasons for these assumptions. In the United States, the minority groups such as African-Americans and Hispanic population constitute the biggest number of convicts. Democrats support for felons voting is perhaps based on the thinking that denying felons the right to vote invades on the democrats voting population hence handing over victory to the Republicans in a silver

plate.

Mississippi is one of the 12 states in the United States that permanently bar some felons from voting. The argument for the state of Mississippi is that felons should not vote because they have made bad choices by committing felony. Roger Clegg, the leader of the conservative advocacy group called Center for Equal Opportunity argue that felons should not vote because they have betrayed the very law that they want to elect people that make laws. Interestingly, Mississippi has the longest list of felony definitions compared to other states. While it is understandable for the incarcerated felons to be denied the voting rights, there is no reason why felons who have served their time be denied the right to vote. Punishing individuals who have served their time is not only fair but also insulting to the concept of democracy.

Felony voting is further inhibited by the inconsistent laws that create a lack of clear guideline on the availability of a common law on the issue. The confusion is not only on the part of the felons but also on the part of government. The cause of the confusion is the misinformation that discourages eligible felons from registering as voters due to undue restrictions process. In some cases, unqualified voters register as voters that make them commit a new crime. In order to solve the problem of felon apathy and to develop a reliable and efficient road map on felon voting, a new law ought to be created from the federal level that handles the case of felon voting finally (Project Vote, 2012). In my view, the federal government of the United States must realize that the right to vote is instrumental in developing a community that is connected and coherent in terms of civil participation. It is only through the development of national policy that the

country can boast of developing the democratic ideals that America is the source of pride for America.

There is a need for opponents of felon voting rights must acknowledge that in a democratic society, voting is a right and not a privilege. It is absurd to claim democracy in the United States if close to 5 million eligible voters are denied this very right courtesy of the old criminal records. Moreover, the denial is black and white law that does not take into considerations the circumstances. Many Americans realize the history of the country has not been particularly rosy in racial equality and treatment of women. This could offer an explanation why so many people minorities are victims of felony. Denying the felons the right to vote even for circumstances that could have been the failure of the state is not only defying the concept of democracy but also discriminating the citizens on the account of the Voting Rights of the fourteenth amendment.

American Civil Liberties Union report that studies have constantly shown that voting has several benefits to the society. The vote empowers the individuals thus making decisions that are helpful to the community. People with votes attend seminars, participate in jury, attend board meetings, and are less likely to be arrested. If the United States would increase the likelihood of felons to be reincorporated into the society, there is need for felons to be allowed to vote to enjoy the privileges that come with voting.

In conclusion, the right to vote is a political right is a fundamental measure of democratic maturity. Still, the voting right reflects an important moral right that is at the essence of democratic values of self -determination. The right to vote is for many, the representation of the power of the people. The

right to self-determination according to Cholbi is “ the right to shape the conditions of one's own existence and pursue one's own considered conception of the good free from encumbrance except when doing so violates others' rights to do the same. Beneath the classical liberal rhetoric of the rights to life, liberty, and happiness is the notion that each of us possesses both a power and a right to shape our lives as we see fit” (Cholbi, p. 248, 2012). Denying felons the right to vote is equal to denying them the right to choose their own future and fosters a future that best represents their own interests.

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