

June 06, 2023

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

Support for ACA 4 (Bryan): Voting Rights for All Californians

In 2020, over 5.1 million citizens in the United States were prohibited from voting because of their contact with the criminal legal system. In California, this included over 50,000 Black people and over 77,000 Latinos alone. The rates of these legal barriers to civic participation and social engagement are shocking: Black men are disenfranchised at a rate 10 times that of white men; Black women at a rate 5 times greater; Latino and Native American men at a rate double that of white men.

This disenfranchisement also disproportionately impacts our veterans, many of whom return to civilian life with visible and invisible trauma and face a likelihood of becoming unhoused and arrested at a rate that is significantly higher than the general public. California currently has nearly 7,000 veterans who are denied their voting rights because they are incarcerated.

The California Constitution currently disqualifies people who are incarcerated in state or federal prison from voting and restores the right upon their release. The law previously required felons to complete their parole period before getting back their right to vote; Californians approved the change to get rid of that requirement in a 2020 constitutional amendment.

Preserving the right to vote for all people, including those who are currently incarcerated, will have significant and positive impacts on community safety. The vast majority of people

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incarcerated in state prison - upward of 95% - will eventually return home. Data shows that people who vote while incarcerated and shortly thereafter are 50% less likely to ever be arrested.

California voters should have the opportunity to decide if our Democracy is one that thrives with the participation of everyone. Assembly Constitutional Amendment 4 (ACA 4) will put a fundamental question to the voters of California: should we restore voting rights to citizens of our State who are completing their prison sentences? Specifically, ACA 4 proposes amending Article II Section 4 to remove the disqualification of incarcerated people from civic participation. ACA 4 will give the people of California a choice - should we be an inclusive, democratic society, or should we turn back to our own dark history of racially motivated disenfranchisement, voter suppression, and restriction of civil rights and participation.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office, through the Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch, to advocate in support of Assembly Constitutional Amendment 4, which would provide voting rights to individuals that are incarcerated, including sending a five-signature letter in support of the bill to Assemblymember Isaac Bryan.

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