

Voting Rights Denied to Thousands of Nebraskans

Governor's Veto of Rights Restoration Bill is final for now

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Lincoln, NE –The Nebraska Governor's veto of a bill that would have restored voting rights to approximately 7,000 citizens with a criminal conviction in their past stands, since the state legislature today fell 7 shy of the 30 votes needed to override the veto.

Had the governor not vetoed the legislation, Nebraska would have become the 20th state to automatically restore voting rights to citizens with past convictions after completion of their sentence.

Current law required citizens with past convictions to wait two years after fully completing their sentence before voting rights are restored. [Nebraska Legislative Bill 75](#), introduced by Sen. Justin Wayne, aimed to modify this statute to eliminate the waiting period. The bill passed on April 24th with a large margin in the state's non-partisan unicameral legislature. Gov. Pete Ricketts vetoed the bill on April 27th despite lawmakers' support.

"We are disappointed in his veto and what it says to those 7,000 voters impacted by the two-year wait period," said **Bri McLarty Huppert, director of voting rights at Nebraskans for Civic Reform**. "NCR will continue to pursue legislation that expands democracy and work in the community to promote civic engagement among returning citizens."

"The ACLU and our partners will continue to fight for Nebraskans voting rights—including voting rights for those with a felony conviction," said **Danielle Conrad, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Nebraska**. "Our communities must rise together to ensure meaningful reentry support for returning citizens. Removing barriers to voting rights is an important factor in reducing recidivism, protecting public safety, and making all our communities stronger."

"Nebraska had a real chance at making its democracy more inclusive, and it's a shame the governor didn't take it by signing this bill," said **Myrna Pérez, deputy director of the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice**. "Individuals living and working in communities all across the state should have a second chance to fully participate in their democracy and exercise their fundamental right to vote."

The Nebraska measure builds on recent support for rights restoration around the country. Earlier this year in neighboring Wyoming, the state enacted a law establishing automatic voting rights restoration for certain citizens with past criminal convictions. In April, Virginia's governor announced that he has restored voting rights to more than 156,000 citizens since taking office. In 2016, Maryland's legislature enfranchised more than 40,000 people, and Delaware removed financial barriers to rights restoration. Overall, in the last 20 years, more than 20 states have made it easier for people with past convictions to vote, vote sooner, or access the right to vote more easily.