

Wilmington, Delaware
January 6, 2022

#0117

Sponsor:

**Council
Member
Darby**

WHEREAS, *15 Del. C. § 6101*. The Constitution of the State allows means by which those losing voting rights from felony convictions can have them reinstated; and

WHEREAS, *15 Del. C. § 6103*. prohibits voter registration of convicted felons who have not served their full sentence nor those convicted of ‘disqualifying felonies’; and

WHEREAS, the fundamental American principle of freedom and opportunity apply to all within, despite errors of judgement. A country where all citizens of this country are granted an inalienable right to vote, for limitations on voting have no place in a true democracy; and

WHEREAS, the removal of the right to vote for inmates has a deep seeded history in racist voter discrimination, and a preservation of such voter disenfranchisement would be a preservation on the history on which it was built. The legacy of such discrimination is one which disproportionately effects the Black and Hispanic communities, having 56% and 9% of prisoners being black and Hispanic respectively, but only being 23% and 4% of the state population; and

WHEREAS, Delaware has been expanding rights to its formerly convicted population by removal of waiting periods and having to satisfy financial penalties prior to voting. Incorporating the currently incarcerated is the next step in declaring that voting is an inalienable right to all our citizenry in our democracy; and

WHEREAS, Delaware has a higher incarceration rate than any other country in the world, developed or not. Within the United States Delaware ranks in the top 60% of imprisonment rates by states, ranking in 21st place. The highest state having 680, the lowest at 133, and Delaware at 382 (measured in incarcerations per 100,000 residents); and

WHEREAS, there is precedent in Vermont, Maine, and the District of Columbia, and this would be a continuation of such just precedent.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON that the Wilmington City Council urges the Delaware General Assembly to enact legislation that will guarantee the right to vote for all Delaware citizens, including those in state run prisons.

Passed by City Council,

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: This Resolution urges the Delaware General Assembly to enact legislation that will allow for all prisoners in state facilities to have their right to vote in local, state, and federal elections re-established.