

SUPPORT HB 4469

VOTING IN JAIL & A “KNOW YOUR VOTING RIGHTS” RESOURCE UPON RELEASE

Sponsors: Stratton-Gabel-Cassidy-C. Mitchell-Gordon-Booth- Currie-Guzzardi-Turner- Wallace-Evans-Mah-Welch-Jones-Fine

There are approximately 20,000 people detained in jail pre-trial in Illinois. Those who are citizens have the right to vote in elections. However, without a formal process in place, voting in jail is nearly impossible for pre-trial detainees.

→ This bill requires county jails and election authorities to collaborate in creating a process that ensures that pre-trial detainees can also cast their ballot during elections.

In any given year, there are approximately 30,000 people who return from prison, all of whom are citizens are eligible to vote in Illinois upon release. Yet many of these citizens do not register to vote because they believe that their past criminal conviction disqualifies them.

→ This bill requires the Illinois Department of Corrections and each county jail to provide eligible citizens released from their custody a voter registration application.

There are approximately 4 million people in Illinois who have a past felony conviction, all of whom are eligible to vote in Illinois. Yet, many of these citizens are not aware of their right to vote.

→ This bill requires the Illinois Department of Corrections to provide citizens released from their custody detailed information about their voting rights.

Voting is a critical component of life.

- Research indicates that re-enfranchising people with criminal convictions cuts the rate of recidivism.
- By increasing voter access for pretrial detainees and educating people with criminal convictions of their right to vote in this state, this bill increase voting amongst pre-trial detainees and the formerly incarcerated, cutting the rate of recidivism.

Registering to vote is the gateway to being civically engaged.

- By providing individuals with a voter registration application upon release from their custody, as required by this bill, the Illinois Department of Corrections and the county jails will help these populations successfully re-enter into society, while also reducing the recidivism rate.

Several counties already ensure that citizens detained in jail pre-trial can vote during elections This bill builds on their good experience to make sure that all eligible citizens who want to vote get to vote.

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Supporting Organizations

ACLU of Illinois
Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Chicago
Business and Professional People for the Public Interest
Cabrini Green Legal Aid
Change Peoria
Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice
Chicago Board of Election Commissioners
Chicago Books to Women in Prison
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
Chicago Council of Lawyers
Chicago Jobs Council
Chicago Lawyer’s Committee for Civil Rights
Chicago Urban League
Chicago Votes

Common Cause Illinois
Community Renewal Society
Heartland Alliance
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Illinois Public Interest Research Group
John Howard Association
League of Women Voters of Chicago
League of Women Voters of Cook County
League of Women Voters of Illinois
Legal Council for Health Justice
National Rainbow PUSH Coalition
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Uptown People’s Law Center

Counties With a Voting Program

Coles
Cook
DuPage
Lake
Piatt
Sangamon
Tazewell