



LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION PARTNERSHIP

ADVANCING JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY SOLUTIONS

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February 15, 2022

Senate President Karen Fann
House Speaker Russell Bowers
State of Arizona

Re: HB 2838 Restoration of Voting Rights

Dear President Karen Fann, Speaker Russell Bowers, and Members of the Arizona House and Senate,

Having served as police officers and prosecutors throughout Arizona and as speakers for the Law Enforcement Action Partnership, we are writing to express our support for the Restoration of Voting Rights Amendment in Arizona.

We support restoring voting rights for Arizona residents who have previously been convicted of a felony in order to reduce recidivism and improve community trust in our justice system.

The Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) is a nonprofit group of police, judges, prosecutors, and other criminal justice professionals who speak from firsthand experience. Our mission is to make communities safer by addressing the root causes of crime and strengthening police-community relations.

We applaud Arizona for already having a statute that allows first-time felony offenders to have their voting rights reinstated. Now we applaud Arizona legislators for introducing this amendment that will extend that right to additional members of the formerly incarcerated population. We are also happy to see that this bill will make the process for voting restoration clearer and more effective.

We know that disenfranchisement has no basis in public safety. In fact, formerly incarcerated people are already able to vote in the majority of other U.S. jurisdictions. Arizona is only one of nine remaining states that

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Formerly known as Law Enforcement Against Prohibition

permanently deprive anyone who commits more than one felony of the right to vote.

The current Arizona law undermines efforts to make sure people are re-entering society productively and safely. The right to vote is a fundamental right of citizenship. Barring previously incarcerated people from voting isolates them and separates them as second-class citizens. We know the stakes are high to ensure successful reentry upon their release, so we should be doing everything in our power to connect them with their community, not creating unnecessary barriers. By voting on issues affecting their community, they can engage in a positive way and continue on the right path post-incarceration.

Restricting voting rights also impacts community trust in the justice system. Our officers depend on the community to share information so that we can prevent and solve crime. Restoring voting rights can help restore this collaboration by showing that the justice system recognizes previously incarcerated people as citizens and stakeholders.

We believe that now is the time for Arizona to join so many other states and expand the right to vote to all previously incarcerated persons who qualify.

Respectfully,

Lt. Diane Goldstein (Ret.)
Executive Director, Law Enforcement Action Partnership

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Gila County Sheriff's Office, Arizona

Det. Sgt. J. Gary Nelson (Ret.)
Scottsdale Police Department
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Superior Court of Arizona
Maricopa County, AZ

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