



February 13, 2020

Re: Rights of Jailed Voters to Cast Ballots

Dear Director,

As you prepare for the busy 2020 election season, we write to remind election officials and law enforcement officials that many people in the justice system retain the right to vote. This is a critical issue as our democracy only works if everyone participates, and research shows that participation in civic life assists jailed individuals with reentry and decreases recidivism.

Unfortunately, many voters are uncertain about their rights. In Ohio, a voter retains their right to cast a ballot if they are:

- Held in jail pretrial;
- Jailed for a misdemeanor conviction;
- On probation, parole, or in a halfway house.

Only those voters incarcerated *after conviction for a felony sentence* are disenfranchised, and they may re-register to vote immediately upon release from prison or jail.

Election and law enforcement officials have a duty to ensure eligible voters have reasonable access to cast a ballot while in jail. Ohio provides Form 11-F, which facilitates election officials to administer absentee ballots to jailed voters (<https://www.sos.state.oh.us/globalassets/elections/forms/11-f.pdf>).

Our organizations have recruited and trained volunteers across the state who are able to provide voter registration and absentee ballot request form assistance. Enclosed with this letter is information outlining the success of our work in Ohio jails where officials allowed our organizations to have direct contact with voters to assist them.

We welcome partnering with election and law enforcement officials to ensure every eligible Ohio voter is able to cast a ballot. Please reach out to Chynna Baldwin, [chynna@allvotingislocal.org](mailto:chynna@allvotingislocal.org) or (330)447-2890 for more information.

Sincerely,

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