

Minutes of the Study Committee on Restoration of Civil Rights for Felons  
August 11, 2007

The meeting was called to order by Molly McClenon, Chair, at 11:15a.m. Attendees were: Meg Gore, Lydia Peale, Lulu Meese, Molly O'Brien, Sue Lewis, Judy Snoke and Eileen Williams. Joining us at 12:15 were Thea Johnson, Vanessa Johnson and Margo Sterling.

The meeting was held in Charlottesville at Molly O'Brien's home. Molly McClenon opened the meeting with a welcome to study committee members and a discussion of directions to 9/15 workshop in Prince William County, VA.

We learned that we have 90 minutes for our workshop in the afternoon from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. Molly McClenon and Margo will do role playing with questions to be used by local leagues in their communities. Packets will be prepared by chair, Molly McClenon and given to participants at workshop, Presidents and Study Chairs of Local Leagues, State Board Members and members of study committee. It is estimated that 75 packets will be needed and that the information for printing will need to reach Molly McClenon by August 22<sup>nd</sup>. (Note: Now Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>.)

Members discussed speakers for 9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. and agreed that Meese should invite the Secretary of the Commonwealth Specialist for restoration of civil rights as our first speaker (30 minutes for presentation and questions). Meese would call Rodney Johnson, Virginia Law Assoc. and ask for suggestion expert in this issue area from Northern Virginia. Meese would call person and invite to be our second speaker. If this person is not available, than Meese would ask Vivian Watts, former Secretary of Public Safety to be our second speaker.

The committee members continued by discussing the revised sheet of questions for local Leagues to use with community interviews. The final sheet of questions was approved. (included with these minutes.)

Meese is to send copy of LWVUS position that supports the right of all to vote.

Virginia and Kentucky are the only two states in USA where felons lose their civil rights for life unless the Governor restores the right. There is a process for reinstatement that can begin for nonviolent felons in 3 years after completion of sentence and probation and in 5 years for violent felons.

8/11/07 Minutes continued by Lydia Peale after Meese left at 2:15.

Local Leagues a) collect local information and stories: b) make contacts and find out people who support this idea and c) meet with probation officers and lawyers and felons who have gotten back civil rights, etc.

Judy Snoke report –a) web search for felons/Virginia found which organizations ad information on website that shows interest in their issue; b) CARES – people concerned about family members transitioning to normal life – are 7 centers in Virginia – brochure available; c) CURE – lobbying for civil rights for felons and d) Judy talked to minister re: organizations concerned about this issue might be on panel.

Sept. 15 Workshop would be a) like a classroom – role-playing first with handouts in packet as planned; b) teaching about study c) brainstorm contacts in our community with use of Judy Snokes handouts on contacts in communities.

Information from local Leagues due back to Molly McClenon by February 27, 08 to meet Virginia Voter spring deadline.

Council will be May 3<sup>rd</sup> and will have a report of Restoration of Civil Rights for Felons.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00p.

**September workshop packets will include:**

- 1. Agenda for workshop prepared by McClenon**
- 2. Introduction to local Leagues and question sheet for community interviews**
- 3. History of disenfranchisement of felons in US AND in Virginia**
- 4. Information sheet on felons – Sterling**
- 5. Information on Speakers – Meese**
- 6. Information on recent law impacting ex-felons in Virginia – Meese**
- 7. The future of Voting Rights Reform – McClenon**
- 8. Questions and Answers About Restoration of civil rights prepared by Secretary of Commonwealth – McClenon has already**
- 9. List of active study committee members**