



100% Right to Vote
Support [SJ 272](#)



Senator Locke has filed a resolution establishing that the sole qualifications to vote in the Commonwealth are being a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old, a Virginia resident, and registered to vote.

[SJ 272](#) will lift restrictions in the [Constitution of Virginia](#) that currently disenfranchise people convicted of a felony or adjudicated to be mentally incompetent.

- The right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy. When we vote, we are all equal: Black, Latinx, White, rich or poor, young or old, regardless of gender identity, we should have equal voices.
- Felony disenfranchisement has a disproportionate impact on people of color. “As of 2016, in ... [Virginia... more than one in five black adults was disenfranchised.](#)” Virginia’s felon disenfranchisement provision is a shameful **vestige of discrimination**. It was adopted in 1830 and [twice expanded during the Jim Crow era](#), in 1876 and 1902, [in order to ensure that far more black men were disenfranchised](#) than whites.¹

- Carter Glass, who led amendment of the suffrage article at the 1901-02 convention, [stated](#) that the convention was intended “to eliminate every Negro voter who can be gotten rid of, legally, without materially impairing the numerical strength of the white electorate.”
- Delegate Gordon [spoke](#) of “rid[ding] Virginia of the terrible evil of Negro suffrage.”
- Delegate Pedigo said “It is unquestionably to the interest of the State of Virginia and to all its people to increase the number of white people in Virginia, as compared with the negro race.”

- When ex-felons participate politically, [evidence indicates](#) “**they will bring their behavior into line with the expectations of the citizen role**, avoiding further contact with the criminal justice system.”
- The League of Women Voters works to empower voters and defend our democracy. We believe “the right to vote should include [all Virginia citizens, whether incarcerated or convicted of a felony.](#)” The only permanent solution is a constitutional right that cannot be abridged by law.

The time is overdue for us to move away from these abysmal aspects of our past. We urge you to pass the 100% right to vote constitutional amendment.

¹ See Holloway, P., “A Chicken-Stealer Shall Lose His Vote: Disfranchisement for Larceny in the South,” 1874-1890, *J. of Southern History*, Vol. 75, No. 4, at 955-958 (Nov. 2009), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1508526>; Morton, R.L., *The Negro in Virginia Politics, 1865-1902*, The University of Virginia, at 95 (1919), <https://lcn.loc.gov/a21000427>. See also, e.g., C. E. Wynes, *Race Relations in Va., 1870-1902*, at 12-14 (1961); N. Riley, *Voter Challengers*, Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law, https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/publications/Voter_Challengers.pdf