
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 47 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY KAZEEM, SANCHEZ, PROBST, HOHENSTEIN, HILL-EVANS,
YOUNG, BURGOS, PARKER, DELLOSO, WAXMAN, KINSEY, MADDEN,
CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, WARREN, KRAJEWSKI, CONKLIN, HOWARD, BELLMON,
KHAN AND FLEMING, MARCH 27, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, MARCH 27, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a
2 study on voting patterns and knowledge about voting rights
3 among formerly incarcerated qualified electors in
4 Pennsylvania and submit a report of its findings and
5 recommendations to the House of Representatives.

6 WHEREAS, The Department of Corrections operates facilities
7 where more than 36,000 incarcerated Pennsylvanians reside; and

8 WHEREAS, State law provides that individuals with a felony
9 conviction may exercise their right to vote upon release from a
10 correctional facility; and

11 WHEREAS, This Commonwealth is one of 21 states where former
12 felons regain the right to vote upon release; and

13 WHEREAS, Confusion over the laws of different states and
14 changes in Commonwealth law in recent decades may lead some
15 formerly incarcerated Pennsylvanians to believe they have
16 permanently lost the right to vote; and

17 WHEREAS, Some states disenfranchise individuals convicted of
18 misdemeanors, causing uncertainty among Pennsylvanians who are

1 not informed about the Commonwealth's voting laws; and

2 WHEREAS, A 2005 report published by The Sentencing Project
3 found that 37% of local officials surveyed in several states
4 were unfamiliar with their state's voting eligibility law or
5 unable to describe it correctly; and

6 WHEREAS, A lack of recent information about the voting
7 patterns of qualified voters who were formerly incarcerated in
8 this Commonwealth clouds the ability of the General Assembly to
9 act to ensure that all qualified electors are aware of their
10 right to vote and able to exercise it; and

11 WHEREAS, Ensuring that formerly incarcerated Pennsylvanians
12 are aware of and able to exercise the right to vote may increase
13 community and civic engagement; and

14 WHEREAS, Collecting data about the voting habits and
15 awareness of formerly incarcerated Pennsylvanians will help
16 policymakers identify problems, address existing knowledge gaps
17 and increase voter engagement; therefore be it

18 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint
19 State Government Commission to conduct a study on voting
20 patterns and knowledge about voting rights among formerly
21 incarcerated qualified electors in Pennsylvania and submit a
22 report of its findings and recommendations to the House of
23 Representatives; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the study conducted by the Joint State
25 Government Commission include, but not be limited to, the
26 following:

27 (1) Rates of voter participation among qualified
28 electors who were formerly incarcerated.

29 (2) The number of qualified electors who were formerly
30 incarcerated.

1 (3) The relationship between length of incarceration and
2 rates of voter participation.

3 (4) Self-reported information about future voting
4 intentions from qualified electors who were formerly
5 incarcerated.

6 (5) Information relating to the knowledge of corrections
7 employees about the relevant laws permitting formerly
8 incarcerated Pennsylvanians to vote.

9 (6) Self-reported experiences with incorrect information
10 about felony or misdemeanor disenfranchisement during a
11 period of incarceration.

12 (7) Barriers that formerly incarcerated qualified
13 electors face when attempting to exercise the right to vote.

14 (8) Recommendations to improve the civic knowledge of
15 qualified electors who were formerly incarcerated and
16 corrections employees;

17 and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission accept
19 and review oral or written comments, documents and other
20 information from individuals seeking to provide input regarding
21 this study; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue a
23 report of its findings and recommendations to the House of
24 Representatives no later than one year after the adoption of
25 this resolution.