

## OKLAHOMA RESTORATION OF VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Under current Oklahoma law, former felons may register to vote only after the time of the original judgment and sentence has elapsed. Most offenders discharge sentences earlier and are released from prison. Example: a person receives a ten year sentence and goes to prison. While there he/she follows the rules, gets a prison job, participates in programs offered. For these positive actions "good time" credits are given whereby each day served is counted as 2 or more days. Hence the original 10 year sentence (3652 days) might be served in 2050 calendar days and the sentence is considered discharged. The person is released from prison. That same person may not register to vote until the full 3652 calendar days have elapsed. To attempt to do so prior to that time is another felony under current law.

The study of barriers to successful reintegration after prison, which LWVOK conducted recently, indicated that this law is a major barrier and should be changed.

Rep. Jeannie McDaniel (LWV member) and Sen. Judy Eason McIntyre have proposed a change which would allow registering to vote as soon as an individual has discharged all sentences. Both proposals, House Bill 1350 and Senate Bill 768, are titled Oklahoma Restoration of Voting Rights Act.

Following the directive of the last LWVOK convention, the League has formed a coalition with Tulsa Metropolitan Ministries, Tulsa Women's Foundation, Resonance, OK Cure, and All of Us or None to support passage of this legislation. Members of all coalition groups are being encouraged to write to legislators to ask support for the measures.

19 other states have amended disenfranchisement policies to allow greater voter eligibility and to end what has been a way of taxation without representation particularly in blocs of the population with a high ratio of imprisonment, women and people of color.

Individuals who do not know who their legislators are may contact the LWV office in Tulsa at 918/747-7933 or [info@lwvtulsa.org](mailto:info@lwvtulsa.org). If legislators are known, e-mail addresses may be obtained by calling 405/524-0126 for senators or by writing to the senator: Oklahoma State, Senate, State Capitol, Oklahoma City, Ok. 73105.. E-mail addresses for representatives may be obtained by calling 800/522-2711 or letters sent to Oklahoma House of Representatives, State Capitol, Oklahoma City, Ok., 73105

As of January 27, it was not known to which committees these Acts had been assigned. Letters to the Committee Chairs and members would be helpful when that information is available.