

# Voter Re-enfranchisement and Collateral Sanctions in MN

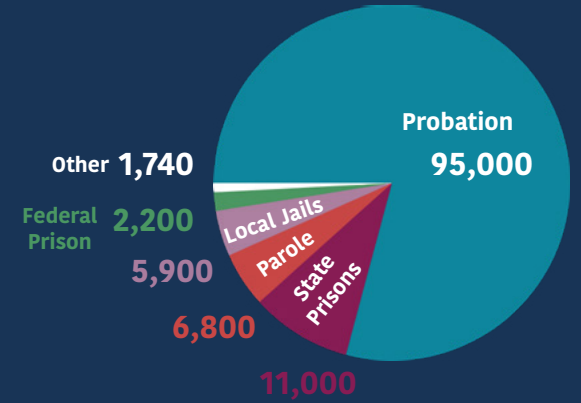
## What is Voter Re-enfranchisement?

Did you know, that if you are convicted of a felony, you lose your civil right to vote until you are no longer under supervision (i.e. parole or probation)?

“The harms of collateral sanctions extend beyond those convicted of crimes to families and communities.” \*

When we talk about voter re-enfranchisement, we are talking about restoring the right to vote to returning residents and all people with criminal felony records who are not serving time in prison.

People in Minnesota's Corrections System



<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/MN.html>

## Why is it an issue?

Removing someone's right to vote, regardless of their crimes, is a violation of their civil rights. In particular, members of our society who pay taxes and whose lives will be affected by policy decisions made by

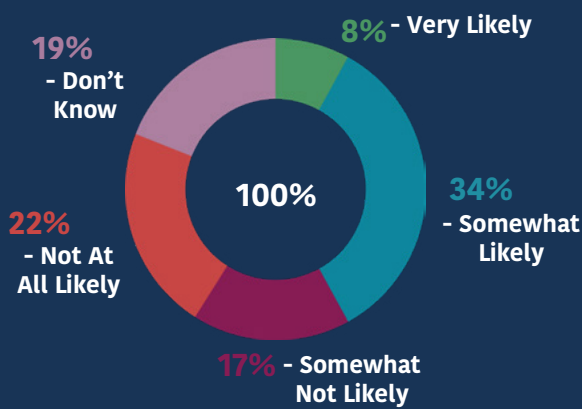
elected leaders, need to have a say in who those elected leaders are. Our very country was founded on that premise - “No taxation without representation.”

The effects of being unable to vote are deeper and more harmful than you might think. Disenfranchisement prevents people from having a stake in their communities.

It can also have long-lasting repercussions for the community: research shows that children are more likely to vote as adults if they are raised by parents who engage in the voting process. By disenfranchising people who are not behind bars, we lose not only the voice of those impacted by disenfranchisement, but we also discourage democratic participation by future generations.

“The ELCA believes actions must be taken to end racial disparity in practices within the adult and juvenile justice systems and to address the issue of racial disparity.” \*

MN Employers Likelihood of Hiring Job Applicant Recently Released from Prison



<https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/publications/trends/march-2020/hiring-criminal-record.jsp>

This is also an issue of racial injustice. As a result of disproportionate contact with the criminal justice system, Black and Indigenous people are disproportionately disenfranchised.

“This statement concurs with the American Bar Association that has called for “restricting the reach of invisible punishment by limiting collateral sanctions to those that relate directly to the offense charged, and prohibiting sanctions that without justification, infringe on fundamental rights, or frustrate the convicted person's chances of successfully reentering society.” \*

## What are Collateral Sanctions?

Collateral sanctions or collateral consequences are a legal penalty, disability or disadvantage that is imposed on a person automatically upon that person's conviction for a felony, misdemeanor or other offense, even if it is not included in the sentence.

This includes everything from legal discrimination in housing and employment practices, to business and/or operating licensures. It can look like court fines and fees or denial of educational and government aid - including entire households, meaning families and dependants could lose any government assistance. Collateral sanctions

are barriers to successful re-entry to society for convicted persons, but they also keep families and communities in poverty by further limiting opportunity.

## What can we do?

We can publically support legislation that works toward reforming our criminal justice system. You do this by:

- calling and emailing your elected officials
- signing a petition and sharing it with others
- having conversations with other people in your congregation and community about this issue, encouraging them to take action as well

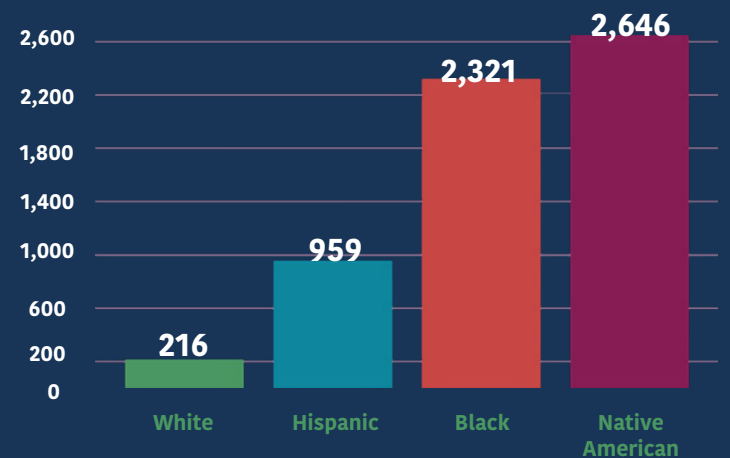
“The practices of responsive love seeking justice means this church also must attend to public policy because human needs are addressed through systems.” \*

29% of adults experiencing homelessness [in Minnesota] report a criminal background is a barrier to getting housing.

<http://mnhomeless.org/minnesota-homeless-study/reports-and-fact-sheets/2018/2018-homelessness-in-minnesota-3-20.pdf>

Minnesota Incarceration Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 2010

(Number of people incarcerated per 100,000 people in that group)



<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/MN.html>

You can commit to take an action like this in the future by [signing up here!](#)

\* all quotes are taken from the ELCA social statement *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries*

