



CITY COUNCILMEMBER
RIGEL ROBINSON
 DISTRICT 7

CONSENT CALENDAR
 May 28, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmembers Rigel Robinson, Kate Harrison, Ben Bartlett, and Cheryl Davila

Subject: Support for ACA-6: Voting Rights for Parolees

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution supporting ACA-6, which restores the right to vote to citizens on parole for the conviction of a felony.

BACKGROUND

On January 28th, 2019, Assemblyman Kevin McCarty introduced the Free Vote Act, a plan which would restore voting rights to parolees. Currently in California, roughly 48,000 people cannot exercise their right to vote, solely because of their parole status.¹

Restoring voting rights to people on parole ensures a greater participation in civic life, and studies by groups such as the Brennan Center for Justice found that re-enfranchisement leads to decreased recidivism.²

Furthermore, disenfranchisement of former prisoners and parolees is part of a long, racist history of disenfranchising the black vote. In a separate study, the Sentencing Project found that African-Americans were disproportionately disenfranchised in states with similar laws.³

The attached resolution states the City of Berkeley's endorsement of the bill and subsequent ballot measure. Copies of the resolution should be sent to Senator Nancy Skinner, Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, and the bill's author, Assemblymember Kevin McCarty.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Consistent with the City's climate and environmental goals.

¹ <https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article225198485.html>

² https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/publications/Florida_Voting_Rights_Outlier.pdf

³ <https://www.sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Felony-Disenfranchisement-Primer.pdf>

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Rigel Robinson, (510) 981-7170
Ronit Sholkoff, Intern to Councilmember Rigel Robinson

Attachments:

1: Resolution

2: Bill Text – ACA 1:

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200ACA1

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ACA-6

WHEREAS, voting is a fundamental right and pillar of American democracy, and;

WHEREAS, the right to vote enables Americans to participate in civic life and increasing enfranchisement creates a stronger, more robust democracy; and

WHEREAS, under current law, approximately 48,000 people in California are legally barred from exercising their civic duty and fundamental right to vote as a citizen of the United States; and

WHEREAS, restrictions on voting rights reinforce a systemic, racist effort to restrict and disenfranchise voters of color and limit their power in the civic process; and

WHEREAS, restoring the right to vote to parolees supports their reintegration into society, reducing recidivism, and;

WHEREAS, ACA-6 (McCarty), also known as the Free Vote Act, will grant parolees the right to vote.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Berkeley hereby endorses ACA-6 and the ballot measure that will result from its passage; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Berkeley may be listed as a supporter of said ballot measure by the official proponents of the measure; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution will be sent to Senator Nancy Skinner, Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, and Assemblymember Kevin McCarty.

