

**FLORIDA
RIGHTS RESTORATION COALITION**

December 6, 2007

The Honorable Charlie Crist, Governor
Office of the Governor
The Capital
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

RE: Voter Registration for Individuals Granted Civil Rights Restoration

Dear Governor Crist:

I write on behalf of the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRRC) to request that you direct the Office of Executive Clemency to include a Florida Voter Registration Application with the certificate of Restoration of Civil Rights sent out to each individual upon restoration of civil rights.

The FRRRC is encouraged by the recent clemency rule changes that you initiated, and were approved by the Board of Executive Clemency, to streamline the restoration of civil rights (RCR) process for certain offenders. Your leadership in accomplishing these changes, as well as your recent decision to make case analysis reports available to individuals seeking RCR, evidence your commitment to improving the RCR process. Facilitating the voter registration process for individuals whose rights are restored is consistent with the initiatives you have undertaken.

The simple act of including voter registration application forms with rights restoration certificates would add simplicity to the voter registration process for individuals whose rights have been recently restored. Not only will this make individuals aware that they are immediately able to register (or re-register) to vote, but it will also make it easier for them to do so. As you know, civic engagement is a vital component of the process of reentry for people with past felony convictions. In addition, the FRRRC supports a process of registering ex-felons to vote that is as aggressive and proactive as the measures that have been historically used to take citizens' rights away when they are convicted.

Also, as you know, delays in implementing the new rule changes have meant that many individuals eligible for "Level 1" RCR processing have waited much longer than anticipated to have their civil rights restored. Therefore, it is all the more important that the state make every effort to streamline the voter registration process so these individuals can participate in the upcoming primary and general elections.

The FRRRC remains committed to its goal of removing from Florida's Constitution the lifetime civil rights ban imposed on persons with past felony convictions who have completed their sentences. However, until that becomes a reality, the clemency process should be free of barriers to full civic participation.

As you remarked on April 5, 2007, when citizens have successfully completed the terms of sentence imposed by the court, the state should not impose additional barriers to them becoming contributing members of our communities. Simplifying the voter registration process serves this important goal.

Governor Charlie Crist

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Thank you in advance for considering this request. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 786-363-2708.

Sincerely,



Ms. Marian Bacon White
President, Florida Rights Restoration Coalition
and
President, Eleventh Episcopal District Lay
Organization of the A.M.E. Church of Florida



Muslima Lewis
Senior Staff Attorney and Racial Justice Project
Director of the ACLU of Florida

cc: Robert Wheeler, Esq.
Ms. Janet Keels

Members of the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition

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| <p>A. Philip Randolph Institute, Miami-Dade Chapter ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) ACLU of Florida Advancement Project Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities Better Way of Miami, Inc. The Brennan Center for Justice Brothers of the Same Mind Concerned United People (CUP) Congregations United for Community Action (CUCA) Demos Determination, Education, Justice, Acceptance (DEJA) Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church F. Malcolm Cunningham, Sr. Bar Association Florida ACORN Florida AFL-CIO Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers Florida Cannabis Action Network Florida Coalition on Black Civic Participation Florida Congress on Racial Equality Florida Conference of NAACP Branches Florida Council of Churches Florida Institutional Legal Services Florida Justice Institute Florida Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) State Chapter Florida Voters League Gray Panthers of South Florida Homeless/Formerly Homeless Forum Human Services Coalition Inner City Grassroots Civic Coalition</p> | <p>International People’s Democratic Uhuru Movement Justice Fellowship Labor Line, Inc. Latino Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) Central FL Chapter Latino Leadership Law Offices of Public Defender Bennett H. Brummer - Miami- Dade County League of Women Voters of Florida Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund Miami-Dade Election Reform Coalition Movement for Change National Lawyers Guild Gainesville Office of Public Defender Carey Haughwout - Palm Beach County Palm Beach County Urban League & Young Professionals Group Peace and Justice Subcommittee of the Presbytery of Tampa Bay People for the American Way Foundation Project Civil Rights Restoration Rainbow/PUSH Coalition The Sentencing Project Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project (SVREP) The March for Justice Virgil Hawkins Florida Chapter of the National Bar Association Voice of Freedom Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. Bar Association YWCA of Greater Miami</p> <p>Individuals Michael T. Hargrett, Sr. David Money</p> |
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