



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF FLORIDA

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League of Women Voters Applauds U.S. Attorney General Holder's Call to End Felon Disenfranchisement Laws

Tallahassee -- On Tuesday, United States Attorney General Eric Holder urged states to repeal laws that prohibit former felony offenders from voting, suggesting that such laws are "not in keeping with our democratic values." In response to the Attorney General's call to end felon disenfranchisement, League of Women Voters of Florida President Deirdre Macnab issued the following statement:

"It is time for Florida to repeal its unjust and obsolete felon disenfranchisement laws, which affect nearly 10% of the voting-age population and over 23% of the African American voting-age population in our state. As one of only four states to permanently bar former felony offenders from voting, it is clear in Florida that even after you serve your time, justice is never fully served.

Citizens should be aware that studies have found that formerly incarcerated people banned from voting were three times as likely to reoffend as those who were allowed to vote.

These outdated policies reflect a Civil War-era mentality and have no place in a modern democracy. We support Attorney General Holder's call for fairness, and urge Florida's Cabinet to get on board and repeal these meaningless and destructive laws."

Nearly 6 million Americans cannot vote due to felon disenfranchisement laws, and approximately 1.5 million of them live in Florida. Currently in the state of Florida, ex-felons must wait at least 5 years before beginning the process to have their rights restored. Prior to 2011, non-violent offenders who had completed their sentences were eligible for automatic rights restoration.

Please contact LWVF President Deirdre Macnab for further comments.

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The League of Women Voters of Florida, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. For more information, please visit the League's website at:

www.TheFloridaVoter.org