

Designing Restoration of Rights Information

# Voting rights after prison: The information barriers to voting after a felony

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# Part 1

## Voting rights after prison

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Registering to vote after a felony conviction is not as simple as completing a voter registration form. The right to vote varies state by state, and in many states, a criminal conviction has serious consequences for a citizen's ability to participate on Election Day.

Only Maine, Vermont and (as of July 7, 2020) Washington, D.C. never bar citizens from voting—even those who are in prison are eligible to vote. In the remaining forty-eight states, a person convicted of a felony loses the right to vote at some point during the justice process. Formerly incarcerated citizens may have their right to vote restored through one of two ways. Some states automatically restore the right to vote once all requirements are met. In others, a formerly incarcerated person must apply to have their voting rights restored.

We wanted to know how much assistance states and non-government organizations provide to help formerly incarcerated citizens understand and use their voting rights. Specifically, we wanted to know how their websites communicate to individuals that they are eligible to vote, and how they explain the rights restoration process to citizens who are not yet eligible.

To get a sense of what information is readily available, we started with Google searches that a typical person might use. Using basic, search terms with common phrases such as “I have been convicted of a felony, can I vote in California?” or “Can I vote in Illinois?” We wanted to see what information a person recently involved in the justice system might see online. We focused on four states—California, Illinois, Maine, and Mississippi—because they offered a range in:

- rights restoration policies
- geographic locations
- population demographics
- population density

In three of these states, Illinois, Maine, and Mississippi, the state published a webpage on the Secretary of State's website designed to help voters. However, these websites provided only a small amount of information for

voters with criminal convictions. Worse, the information that was included on these websites was vague and confusing making them difficult to use. In some cases, the information was hard to find on the website meaning that many users could be at risk of missing it. Without clear guidance from the state, our citizens are at risk of falling victim to misinformation, missing an opportunity to vote, or attempting to vote when they should not.

## **Misinformation as voter suppression?**

When information for voters is missing or hard to find, it becomes an added barrier that can keep people from voting. Without clear information, many are completely unaware that they are eligible to vote, while others might fear that if they register to vote they might be committing election fraud. This was the unfortunate consequence that a Texas woman, Crystal Mason, faced after casting a provisional ballot in the 2016 general election. Mason had never been told that because she was on federal supervised release, Texas considered her ineligible to vote. On election day, she arrived at her polling place and completed a ballot like she had always done in previous elections. Mason only learned that she was not eligible to vote six months later when she was arrested. The government's failure to communicate with Mason has resulted in her receiving a five-year sentence for fraudulently voting.

Information that is not explicitly clear jeopardizes citizens' voting rights, and also their freedom, by leaving important questions unasked or unanswered. This type of misinformation runs the risk of morphing into a form suppression because a right someone does not know about, is not a right that can be used. Without explicit and clear information for our justice-involved citizens, we help to perpetuate the misinformation that has created a system of de facto disenfranchisement.

A 2018 article [published](#) by *Mississippi Today* highlights how foggy communication can allow misinformation and de facto disenfranchisement to thrive.<sup>1</sup> In Mississippi, the state strips citizens of their right to vote if they are convicted of one of 22 felonies. According to the article, Jed Blackerby always understood that his conviction for aggravated assault barred him from voting. However, aggravated assault is not one of the crimes that bars

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<sup>1</sup> <https://mississippitoday.org/2018/11/01/not-all-ex-felons-are-barred-from-voting-in-mississippi-but-no-one-is-telling-them-that/>

a person from voting. Years later, after learning that he had been eligible to vote the whole time, Blackerby told *Mississippi Today* that

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“No one gave any guidance....a long time ago when convicted felons, point blank, were not allowed to vote, (government officials) never made it public until afterwards that (people with) certain types of convictions were allowed to vote. It had never been publicized.”

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Jed’s comments encapsulate a pattern that is clear in our Google searches. Information about voting rights for previously incarcerated people is not well-publicized. Further, what is publicized by the states that we studied is often buried deep in government websites where it is difficult to find. When the information can be found, it is frequently confusing, leaving the would-be voter to guess whether or not they are eligible to register.

# Information available online

To explore just how difficult it is to learn whether someone is eligible to vote, we looked at what is easily available on the web through Google searches. General search terms can lead voters to some tools and websites that help explain rights clearly. However, there are also many websites that are highly confusing and become a barrier to understanding voting rights.

## Information from advocacy organizations

To gain a broad overview, we started with general search terms. On one of the first searches we used the term, “restore my voting rights.” From this search we found a tool published by the Campaign Legal Center.



### Restore Your Vote: I have a felony conviction. Can I vote?

Many people wonder, "can I vote with a felony conviction?" and assume the laws have restricted their rights. But that's not true! While many states have some restriction on felon voting rights, most states restore the right to vote to citizens after they complete their sentences. In fact, up to 18 million Americans with past convictions can vote RIGHT NOW – they just don't know it – because the felony disenfranchisement laws in every state can be confusing.

With the help of this website, you will no longer have to wonder whether you have the right to vote and will no longer have to ask, "can I restore my right to vote?" If you are a United States citizen, you can answer the key questions below about your conviction(s) and determine if you are eligible to vote right now, or eligible to go through the process to restore your right to vote.

Please know that using this website is completely anonymous. We do not capture any information about you.

[Utilice esta guía en español.](#)

In what state do you want to register to vote?

Have you been convicted of a felony?

 Yes  No

Are you currently incarcerated for your felony conviction?

 Yes  No

Are you currently on state parole?

 Yes  No

**You can vote!** That's true even if you are on probation, mandatory supervision, post-release community release, or federal supervised release.

[Register to vote with our friends at Vote.org.](#)

Sample of the questions on the Campaign Legal Center, starting with the state where you want to vote (<https://campaignlegal.org/restoreyourvote>)

The Campaign Legal Center tool is located on a page called [Restore Your Vote](#). The tool asks the user a series of short and friendly yes or no questions. The page is designed so that the next question only appears after the previous has been answered—a feature that prevents the user from becoming overwhelmed.

After completing the first four questions a call to action appears with a prompt to visit the Vote.org website to register to vote. The call to action link sends users to the Vote.org website to register to vote.

The CLC site uses the same format for all fifty states. Slightly different questions are asked for each state to ensure that the site is providing accurate information for each state. The CLC *Restore Your Vote tool* provides a simple answer to the question of whether someone is eligible to vote. However, one downside is that the site is only optimized for general search terms and voters who search specifically for their state might miss it.

The CLC website clearly answers both questions that we are looking for. For voters who are eligible to vote, the call to action informs them that they are eligible to register. For voters who are not currently eligible, a similar message appears telling the user at what point they will become eligible to register.

The screenshot shows a webpage from Illinois Legal Aid. The main heading is "CAN I VOTE IF I HAVE BEEN CONVICTED OF A FELONY?". Below the heading is a "Rate" section with five stars and the text "No votes yet". The main content area contains the following text: "In Illinois, if you have spent time in jail or have a criminal record, you still have the right to vote. Once you are no longer in the custody of the Illinois Department of Corrections, your right to vote is automatically restored. If you have previously lost your right to vote because of a felony conviction, you will need to re-register to vote once you have been released from prison." Below this text is a section titled "When am I able to vote?" with the following text: "If you have been accused of committing a felony, or have been convicted of a felony, you may still have the right to vote. As long as you are no longer in the custody of the Illinois Department of Corrections, you have the right to vote if:" followed by a bulleted list: "• Your case is in court, and no verdict has been given yet; • You are being held in jail while your case is in court, and no verdict has been given; • You are on probation, or • You are on parole." To the left of the main content is a "RELATED" section with a link to "Voting by mail basics (Text article)" which "Explains absentee ballots if you are not able to vote in the state, getting a mail ballot, and casting a vote by mail." At the bottom right of the page is a "Feedback" button and a "Chat With Us" button. The URL in the address bar is "oislegalaid.org/legal-information/citizens-immigration".

Illinois voting rights page from the Illinois Legal Aid website.  
<https://www.illinoislegalaid.org/legal-information/can-i-vote-if-i-have-been-convicted-felony>

Under a google search for the state of Illinois, we found a second non-government organization called Illinois Legal Aid. Illinois Legal Aid managed a webpage called [Can I Vote if I Have Been Convicted of A Felony?](#) On the page, a few short paragraphs were supplied that provided information about who is eligible to vote after a felony conviction.

Like the Campaign Legal Center's tool, Illinois Legal Aid also clearly answers both questions that we focused on for this project. The second line of the page reads:

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"Once you are no longer in the custody of the Illinois Department of Corrections, you have the right to vote."

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While the CLC page and Illinois Legal Aid use vastly different styles of conveying information to formerly incarcerated individuals, both clearly communicate whether or not a person is eligible to vote. In addition, both pages inform those who are not eligible to vote when and how they can have their right to vote restored.



## Information from government websites

Looking at state elections or Secretary of State websites, the amount and usefulness of information concerning voting rights for people with a felony conviction is highly variable. Each of the four states we studied—California, Illinois, Maine, and Mississippi—serve as examples.

### California

Do you have a criminal conviction? You may be eligible to vote.

Please respond to the statements below to determine if you may be eligible to vote.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I am a United States citizen and a resident of California.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I will be 18 years old or older on election day.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I am currently in state or federal prison or on parole for the conviction of a felony.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I have been found mentally incompetent to vote by a court.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

You are eligible to vote. [Please register here.](#)  
For more information about voting with a criminal conviction, please see [Voting rights: Persons with a criminal history](#)

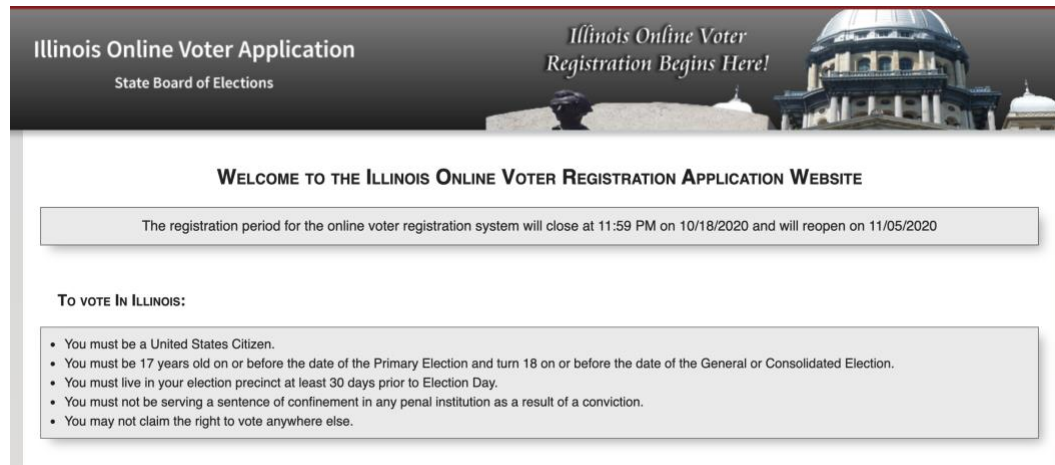
California Secretary of State web page for would-be voters with a criminal conviction <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/restore-your-vote/>

California made the process of finding voter rights information for formerly incarcerated citizens clear and simple for two reasons. First, the page was easy to find. It was the first result on google.

Second, the tool provided by California was almost identical to the Campaign Legal Center's *Restore Your Vote* page. Just like CLC, California answers both "Am I eligible to vote?" and "When will I become eligible to vote?" The call to action at the bottom of the page encourages those who are eligible to vote to register. Similarly, for those who are not eligible, the page explains when their status will change.

Further, for the people of California, this tool is particularly useful because it is on a state website. Having this tool available on the state website is important because it can be used to combat misinformation and reassure users that the information is accurate.

## Illinois



Illinois Secretary of State website page on voter registration

<https://ova.elections.il.gov/>

On the Illinois Secretary of State’s website, the most detailed information that we could find for voters who had previously been incarcerated was provided under the online registration page along with the voter qualifications. The page did not link to any further information, so we searched the website and quickly became lost. After twenty minutes of searching, we were unable to find any further information on the state’s website.

With so little information easily available on the website, many voters who have been involved in the justice system may struggle to learn about and exercise their right to vote. The bullet for voters with criminal convictions is troubling because it reads:

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“You must not be serving a sentence of confinement in any penal institution as a result of a conviction”

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This sentence is not written in plain language which may make it hard for many readers to decipher exactly what it means.

- There is no explicit mention to current incarceration or previous incarceration.
- It makes no distinction between felony, misdemeanor, or pretrial incarceration.

- Legal terms like “a sentence of confinement” may not be easy to understand, even for someone who is involved in the criminal justice system.
- The sentence opens with “you must not be” which could be confusing to many readers. Adjusting the sentence structure so that it reads “If you are currently incarcerated....” can help make it less confusing.

This means that many citizens involved in the justice system who are eligible to vote, can easily misunderstand or struggle to understand their voting rights. The state also fails to offer any further guidance to previously incarcerated individuals largely leaving the justice involved community to navigate the voting process with little assistance.

The Illinois page can be used to answer the question of whether or not a person is eligible to register, however, the way the information is presented can make answering this question difficult. Illinois differs from the websites discussed above in that it requires more work from the user to answer the questions. For example, CLC, California, and Illinois Legal Aid each tell the user explicitly who is eligible, who is not, and at what point a person will become eligible. The Illinois Secretary of State page only explains when a person cannot vote and requires the user to figure out the rest on their own.

## Maine

<a href="#">Home</a> → <a href="#">Corporations, Elections &amp; Commissions</a> → <a href="#">Elections &amp; Voting</a> → <a href="#">Voter Information</a> → <a href="#">Voter Rights</a>	
<a href="#">CEC Home</a> <a href="#">Corporations</a> <a href="#">Uniform Commercial Code (UCC)</a> <a href="#">Elections &amp; Voting</a> <a href="#">Upcoming Elections</a> <a href="#">Election Results</a> <a href="#">Election Security</a> <a href="#">Electoral Districts</a> <a href="#">Voter Information</a> <a href="#">Voter Registration Data &amp; Election Data</a> <a href="#">Reports &amp; Studies</a> <a href="#">Municipal Officials</a> <a href="#">Candidate Information</a> <a href="#">Citizen Initiatives &amp; Peoples Veto</a> <a href="#">Boards &amp; Commissions</a> <a href="#">Notaries &amp; Dedimus Justice</a> <a href="#">Authentications &amp; Apostilles</a> <a href="#">State Rulemaking</a>	<h3>Your Right to Vote in Maine</h3> <p>Maine has one of the most accessible voting processes in the country. If you feel you have been denied the opportunity to vote, please discuss the situation with the local clerk or warden. If you cannot resolve the issue, contact the Elections Division at 207-624-7650. To be eligible to vote in Maine, you must meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 years old</li> <li>• United States Citizen</li> <li>• Resident of the municipality in which you want to vote</li> </ul> <p>Please review the following information regarding your voting rights in this state. Thank you for taking part in our democracy.</p> <h4>Voter Rights</h4> <p>The U.S. Constitution gives all citizens the right to vote.</p> <p>I can register to vote in Maine if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am a United States citizen;</li> <li>• I live in a town or city in Maine; and</li> <li>• I am 17 years old and will be 18 years old by Election Day. <a href="#">21-A.MRSA §111.</a></li> </ul> <p>If I am registered to vote in Maine, I can vote. I do not need to show ID to get a ballot. <a href="#">21-A.MRSA §111</a> and <a href="#">671.</a></p> <p>I may vote by absentee ballot instead of voting in person at the voting place. I do not need a reason to vote by absentee ballot. <a href="#">21-A.MRSA §6751</a> and <a href="#">753-<sup>A</sup></a>.</p> <p>If I am not registered to vote, I can register on Election Day and vote. (I must register in person and must show ID and proof of where I live.) <a href="#">21-A.MRSA §121.</a></p> <p>I cannot be turned away from my voting place. I must be allowed to vote a challenged ballot. (If I don't have ID or proof of where I live, I will cast a challenged ballot. I may be asked to show ID after the election.) <a href="#">21-A.MRSA §§121, 161</a> and <a href="#">673.</a></p> <p>If I am in line at the voting place at 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, I still may register and vote. <a href="#">21-A.MRSA §§127</a> and <a href="#">626.</a></p> <p>I may see a sample ballot and get help on how to mark my ballot before I vote. I also may ask for help to read or mark my ballot. <a href="#">21-A.MRSA §6651</a> and</p>

Maine Secretary of State Website: <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter-info/right.html>

Maine does not strip any individual of their voting rights, no matter what they are convicted of. Searching the phrase, “restore my voting rights, Maine” only generated information explaining felon disenfranchisement including information from the [National Council of State Legislatures](#) and [Nonprofit Vote](#). We realized that since Maine never bars anyone from voting, using the term “restore my rights” was not the best option. However, this speedbump that we encountered during our research underscores an issue that many voters could be struggling with. Even with a common search term like “restore my voting rights,” we were not directed to any website that had further information. Voters who are unaware that Maine does not strip citizens convicted of felonies of their voting rights could spend large amounts of time searching for information about a right they never lost. This produces an additional barrier to voting that could be impacting thousands of people who are residents of Maine.

We adjusted our search and used the term “What are my voting rights in Maine?” Still, we struggled to find clear information. We were first brought to the Secretary of State’s website which was difficult to navigate. In addition to being unfriendly for the user, the page makes no explicit mention that incarcerated citizens may vote. The lack of explicit information makes it difficult to easily determine who can vote in the state, even when every adult resident of Maine is eligible to vote regardless of criminal history.

Like the Illinois Secretary of State page, the Maine website also requires the user to read between the lines. The site provides three bullets laying out who can vote in the state. None of these bullets makes any mention to people who have previously been incarcerated. Since it is not listed as a disqualifying factor, a voter can deduce that they are eligible to vote from these, but the website makes no explicit mention that anyone can vote regardless of their criminal past.

## Mississippi



Mississippi's Y'all vote <https://www.sos.ms.gov/vote/Pages/default.aspx>

Finally, a search in Mississippi only returned a handful of local news articles. When I went to the Secretary of State's website, I was directed to the State's voter information center, a website titled, [Y'all vote](#).

### DISENFRANCHISING CRIMES

Based upon the most recent Attorney General's Opinion dated July 9, 2009, directed to The Honorable Wallace Heggie, the following comprise disenfranchising crimes:

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Arson              | 12. Obtaining Money or Goods under False Pretenses |
| 2. Armed Robbery      | 13. Perjury  |
| 3. Bigamy             | 14. Rape   |
| 4. Bribery            | 15. Receiving Stolen Property                      |
| 5. Embezzlement       | 16. Robbery  |
| 6. Extortion          | 17. Theft  |
| 7. Felony Bad Check   | 18. Timber Larceny                                 |
| 8. Felony Shoplifting | 19. Unlawful Taking of Motor Vehicle               |
| 9. Forgery            | 20. Statutory Rape                                 |
| 10. Larceny           | 21. Carjacking                                     |
| 11. Murder            | 22. Larceny Under Lease or Rental Agreement        |

Mississippi Disenfranchising crimes <https://www.sos.ms.gov/Elections-Voting/Documents/SummaryofAttorneyGeneralOpinionsonElectionIssues.pdf>

The *Y'all vote* page was packed with almost any information that a Mississippi resident would need in order to learn about voting. However, the website lacked information regarding voting rights for previously

incarcerated citizens. Under the tab titled [Disenfranchising Crimes](#), I was brought to a pdf document (shown above). The document simply lists the 22 crimes that result in permanent disenfranchisement. There was no information about what disenfranchisement means, who is still eligible to vote, or how to have your rights restored. For a state that has an online voter information center, it is concerning that hardly any information is provided to the thousands of citizens who may be interested in voting after completing a sentence for a felony conviction.

Mississippi falls short of answering both questions. Like in Maine, the user is required to make determinations about their right to vote by reading between the lines. However, the information provided by the Y'all vote page is even more vague. While Maine tells the reader, who can vote and requires the voter to deduce that criminal convictions are not a prohibiting factor, Mississippi provides a list of 22 crimes that "comprise disenfranchising crimes." The State does not tell the voter whether this list is exhaustive, or how a citizen who has been disenfranchised can have their rights restored. The only thing that the user can know for certain is that if they have been found guilty of one of the 22 crimes, they lose the right to vote for at least some point of time.

# Conclusion

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Overall, this study illustrates how much variance there is in the way different states publicize voter information for their citizens who have been involved in the justice system. However, the story of Jed Blackerby shows the adverse effects that we expose formerly incarcerated citizens to when we fail to provide clear and concise information. Struggling to learn about your voting rights, is not an issue that only impacts the individual. If the problem is widespread enough, its repercussions can ripple out, impacting the broader community.

Citizens who have been incarcerated and the communities which they return too are at a higher risk of being impacted by voter misinformation. As we have explored above, voters who have been incarcerated, do not always have the easiest path to registering to vote. In addition, the process of reentering the community after a period of incarceration is challenging. Many formerly incarcerated citizens struggle to get their feet on the ground and become active members of society. By encouraging our formerly incarcerated citizens to vote, we can alleviate some of the burdens that accompany reentry and help our justice-involved citizens take a meaningful stake in society. Publishing clear information that is specific to voters who have been incarcerated is about more than helping a specific set of people vote. It is about creating communities that are home to flourishing democracies.

## Part 2

# Voting rights after prison



# Sample pages for an elections website

The following pages cover three places on an elections website that include information about voting after a felony conviction or while involved with the justice system.

The full presentation is available in a separate file: **Explaining-voter-rights-web-samples-2020-07-19.pdf**

## Voter eligibility information

Integrating restoration of rights information into the page or section with general information about voter eligibility.

The screenshot shows a website header for the State of Hamilton Elections and Voting. The header includes the State Seal, the text 'State of Hamilton Elections and Voting', and a 'Recommended' badge. A navigation menu on the left lists various voter information topics, with 'Registering to Vote' selected. The main content area is titled 'Registering to Vote' and features a section 'Am I eligible to vote?' with a bulleted list of questions: 'Are you a United States citizen?', 'Do you live in the State of Hamilton?', 'Are you at least 18 years old?', and 'If you have been convicted of a felony, are your voting rights restored?'. Below the list is a link to an 'Information guide for voters with felony convictions'. A concluding statement reads: 'If you have answered yes to all these questions, you can vote! Follow the steps to register below.'


To make this information useful:

- Make the information clearer by listing the voter qualifications in a question format. This also eliminates the need to have negative requirements
- Include a clear, descriptive link to a page for voters with a criminal history.

- Include a link for restoration of rights information. Putting this in the navigation menu with other special audiences will ensure that it is easy to find.

## Voters in the criminal justice system details page

A separate page with room to provide complete explanations and links as needed.

 Hamilton Voter information Guide: <b>Voters in the Criminal Justice System</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Recommended</b></span>	
<b>Voter information</b>	<p><b>Can I register to vote?</b> You can register to vote if you have been convicted of a felony and completed your sentence. This includes completing probation and parole.</p> <p>You have not lost your rights and can vote if you are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in jail and awaiting trial</li> <li>• in jail for a misdemeanor.</li> </ul>
Registering to Vote	
Voting at a Polling Place	
Absentee Voting	<p><b>How do I register to vote?</b> If you were registered to vote before your conviction, your registration was canceled at the time of your conviction. You will need to reregister in order to vote. If you are eligible, you can <a href="#">register online</a>.</p>
Accessible Voting	
College Students	<p><b>What address should I use when registering to vote?</b> If you have completed your sentence: use the address that you are currently living.</p> <p>If you are in jail or registering from prison: use your most recent address from before your confinement.</p>
Language Support	
Overseas Voters	<p><b>How will I vote?</b> If you are currently in jail you will vote by absentee ballot.</p> <p>If you are not in jail or prison, you will vote at your polling place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Find your polling place</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Learn about absentee voting</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Contact your county election office</a></li> </ul>
Voters in the Criminal Justice System	
Frequently Asked Questions	

To make this information useful:

- Use a page title that the audience can identify with
- Break up the text with questions on the left and answers on the right to make the page easier to scan.
- Include links to other relevant pages.
- Many voters may be currently serving in jails and still be eligible to vote. Including information about addresses prevents confusion and ensures that eligible voters can register accurately.
- Include information about absentee voting for people registering and voting from jail.

## Questions and answers

Including information for voters involved with the justice system in any general Q&A page provides another entry point to detailed information.

The screenshot shows a website header for the State of Hamilton Elections and Voting. On the left is the State Seal. On the right, the word 'Recommended' is displayed in a large, bold font. Below the header is a navigation menu with items: Voter Information, Election Information and Statistics, Candidate Information, Election Resources, Party and Committee Information, College Students, Justice involved voters, and Frequently Asked Questions. The 'Frequently Asked Questions: Voter Registration' section is expanded, showing a list of questions with expandable/collapsible icons. The questions are: 'What Do I need to know?', 'What are the Qualifications?', 'Can I Register to Vote if I Have Been Convicted of a Felony?', 'Can I Register If I don't have a fixed Address?', 'When Can I register to vote?', and 'When can I change my political party?'. The 'Can I Register to Vote if I Have Been Convicted of a Felony?' question is expanded to show two bullet points with links to 'Information guide for voters with felony convictions' and 'Hamilton Department of Corrections'.

To make this information useful:

- If you have an FAQ page, use it to provide minimal answers and link to detailed information.
- Make your FAQ page easier to read by hiding text in sections that expand when readers click on them
- Always direct the user to where they can learn more
- Remind formerly incarcerated citizens that they can also contact the Department of Corrections or their probation officer for more information about their status.

# Resources

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## Resources and samples of information

National Conference of State Legislatures – Felon Voting Rights

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/felon-voting-rights.aspx>

Campaign Legal Center

<https://campaignlegal.org/>

Illinois Legal Aid Online – Can I vote if I have been convicted of a felony

<https://www.illinoislegalaid.org/legal-information/can-i-vote-if-i-have-been-convicted-felony>

## State web pages for voters with felony convictions

State	Web page
Alabama	<i>(no dedicated page found)</i>
Alaska	<a href="http://www.elections.alaska.gov/Core/whocanregisterandwhocanvote.php">http://www.elections.alaska.gov/Core/whocanregisterandwhocanvote.php</a>
Arizona	<a href="https://azsos.gov/elections/voting-election/register-vote-or-update-your-current-voter-information">https://azsos.gov/elections/voting-election/register-vote-or-update-your-current-voter-information</a>
Arkansas	<i>(no dedicated page found)</i>
California	<a href="https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/voting-california/who-can-vote-california/voting-rights-californians/">https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/voting-california/who-can-vote-california/voting-rights-californians/</a>
Colorado	<a href="https://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/FAQs/VotingAndConviction.html">https://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/FAQs/VotingAndConviction.html</a>
Connecticut	<a href="https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SOTS/ElectionServices/HAVA/HavaPDF/TheUltimateFreedompdf.pdf">https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SOTS/ElectionServices/HAVA/HavaPDF/TheUltimateFreedompdf.pdf</a>
Delaware	<a href="https://elections.delaware.gov/voter/felons.shtml">https://elections.delaware.gov/voter/felons.shtml</a>
District of Columbia	<a href="https://dcboe.org/index.aspx#">https://dcboe.org/index.aspx#</a>
Florida	<a href="http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/Voter-Information/Voter-Information.aspx">http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/Voter-Information/Voter-Information.aspx</a>
Georgia	<a href="http://www.senate.ga.gov/committees/Documents/SR153StudyCommitteeFactSheetOctober1.pdf">http://www.senate.ga.gov/committees/Documents/SR153StudyCommitteeFactSheetOctober1.pdf</a>
Hawaii	<a href="https://elections.hawaii.gov/voters/i-am-a/voters-with-a-felony-conviction/">https://elections.hawaii.gov/voters/i-am-a/voters-with-a-felony-conviction/</a>
Idaho	<i>(no dedicated page found)</i>

State	Web page
Illinois	<i>(no dedicated page found)</i>
Indiana	<a href="https://www.in.gov/sos/elections/files/2012_Voters_Bill_of_Rights.pdf">https://www.in.gov/sos/elections/files/2012_Voters_Bill_of_Rights.pdf</a>
Iowa	<a href="https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterinformation/restorerights.html">https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterinformation/restorerights.html</a>
Kansas	<a href="https://sos.ks.gov/Pubs/Elections/Guides/English/Voting-and-Felony-Convictions-Guide.pdf">https://sos.ks.gov/Pubs/Elections/Guides/English/Voting-and-Felony-Convictions-Guide.pdf</a>
Kentucky	<a href="https://civilrightsrestoration.ky.gov/Pages/home.aspx">https://civilrightsrestoration.ky.gov/Pages/home.aspx</a>
Louisiana	<i>(no dedicated page found)</i>
Maine	<a href="https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter-info/resident.html">https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter-info/resident.html</a>
Maryland	<a href="https://elections.maryland.gov/voter_registration/restoration.html">https://elections.maryland.gov/voter_registration/restoration.html</a>
Massachusetts	<i>(no dedicated page found)</i>
Michigan	<a href="https://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,4670,7-127-5647_12539_29836-202492--,00.html">https://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,4670,7-127-5647_12539_29836-202492--,00.html</a>
Minnesota	<a href="https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/register-to-vote/i-have-a-criminal-record/">https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/register-to-vote/i-have-a-criminal-record/</a>
Mississippi	<a href="https://www.sos.ms.gov/Elections-Voting/Documents/SummaryofAttorneyGeneralOpinionsonElectionIssues.pdf">https://www.sos.ms.gov/Elections-Voting/Documents/SummaryofAttorneyGeneralOpinionsonElectionIssues.pdf</a>
Missouri	<i>(no dedicated page found)</i>
Montana	<i>(no dedicated page found)</i>
Nebraska	<a href="https://sos.nebraska.gov/elections/felon-voting-rights">https://sos.nebraska.gov/elections/felon-voting-rights</a>
Nevada	<a href="https://www.nvsos.gov/sos/elections/voters/restoration-of-voting-rights-in-nevada">https://www.nvsos.gov/sos/elections/voters/restoration-of-voting-rights-in-nevada</a>
New Hampshire	<i>(no dedicated page found)</i>
New Jersey	<a href="https://www.state.nj.us/corrections/pdf/OTS/FRARA/VoterRegistration/6-7-10-Ex-Offender%20Voter%20Restore%20Handbook.pdf">https://www.state.nj.us/corrections/pdf/OTS/FRARA/VoterRegistration/6-7-10-Ex-Offender%20Voter%20Restore%20Handbook.pdf</a>
New Mexico	<a href="https://portal.sos.state.nm.us/OVR/WebPages/Eligibility.aspx">https://portal.sos.state.nm.us/OVR/WebPages/Eligibility.aspx</a>
New York	<a href="https://ag.ny.gov/civil-rights/voting-rights">https://ag.ny.gov/civil-rights/voting-rights</a>
North Carolina	<a href="https://www.ncsbe.gov/Portals/0/Documents/VotingRightsGuide_CriminalJusticeSystem.pdf">https://www.ncsbe.gov/Portals/0/Documents/VotingRightsGuide_CriminalJusticeSystem.pdf</a>
North Dakota	<i>(no dedicated page found)</i>

State	Web page
Ohio	<a href="https://www.sos.state.oh.us/elections/voters/voter-eligibility-residency-reqs/#qualifications">https://www.sos.state.oh.us/elections/voters/voter-eligibility-residency-reqs/#qualifications</a>
Oklahoma	<i>(no dedicated page found)</i>
Oregon	<a href="https://sos.oregon.gov/voting-elections/Documents/Voter-Status-FAQ.pdf">https://sos.oregon.gov/voting-elections/Documents/Voter-Status-FAQ.pdf</a>
Pennsylvania	<a href="https://www.votespa.com/Register-to-Vote/Pages/Convicted-Felon,-Misdemeanant-or-Pretrial-Detainee.aspx">https://www.votespa.com/Register-to-Vote/Pages/Convicted-Felon,-Misdemeanant-or-Pretrial-Detainee.aspx</a>
Rhode Island	<a href="https://elections.ri.gov/faq/">https://elections.ri.gov/faq/</a>
South Carolina	<a href="https://www.scvotes.gov/south-carolina-voter-registration-information">https://www.scvotes.gov/south-carolina-voter-registration-information</a>
South Dakota	<a href="https://sdsos.gov/elections-voting/voting/register-to-vote/felony-convictions.aspx">https://sdsos.gov/elections-voting/voting/register-to-vote/felony-convictions.aspx</a>
Tennessee	<a href="https://sos.tn.gov/products/elections/restoration-voting-rights">https://sos.tn.gov/products/elections/restoration-voting-rights</a>
Texas	<a href="https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/laws/effects.shtml">https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/laws/effects.shtml</a>
Utah	<i>(no dedicated page found)</i>
Vermont	<a href="https://sos.vermont.gov/elections/voters/voter-faqs/voter-registration-faqs/#q27">https://sos.vermont.gov/elections/voters/voter-faqs/voter-registration-faqs/#q27</a>
Virginia	<a href="https://www.restore.virginia.gov/">https://www.restore.virginia.gov/</a>
Washington	<a href="https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voters/felons-and-voting-rights.aspx">https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voters/felons-and-voting-rights.aspx</a>
West Virginia	<a href="https://sos.wv.gov/FormSearch/Elections/Voter/Felon%20Voting%20Rights.pdf">https://sos.wv.gov/FormSearch/Elections/Voter/Felon%20Voting%20Rights.pdf</a>
Wisconsin	<a href="https://elections.wi.gov/sites/default/files/publication/154/voting_guide_for_ex_felons_incarcerated_voters_pd_24428.pdf">https://elections.wi.gov/sites/default/files/publication/154/voting_guide_for_ex_felons_incarcerated_voters_pd_24428.pdf</a>
Wyoming	<a href="http://corrections.wyo.gov/home/restoration-of-voting-rights">http://corrections.wyo.gov/home/restoration-of-voting-rights</a>

### **About Mark D'Ostilio**

Through his background studying criminology and history, Mark has developed a passion for understanding inequalities in America. Granted the Nevins Fellowship through the McCourtney Institute for Democracy, Mark put his passion to use at the Center for Civic Design.

Mark's work focused on voting rights for citizens who have been incarcerated. His project studies how advocacy organizations and state governments publish information about voting rights and how they can better meet the needs of citizens who have been incarcerated

### **About Center for Civic Design**

We believe that democracy is a design problem.

Across all of our projects, our research suggests that the voter journey—all of the information, decisions, interactions that get a voter from an intention to vote to actually casting a ballot—is a story of seemingly small barriers that can add up to a vote not cast.

We bring civic design skills in research, usability, design, accessibility, and plain language to improve the voting experience, make elections easier to administer, and encourage participation in elections. Through our work, we have helped hundreds of election officials build their skills and capacity, and touched millions of voters in small but important ways.

Web: <https://civicdesign.org/>

Twitter: [@civicdesign](https://twitter.com/civicdesign)