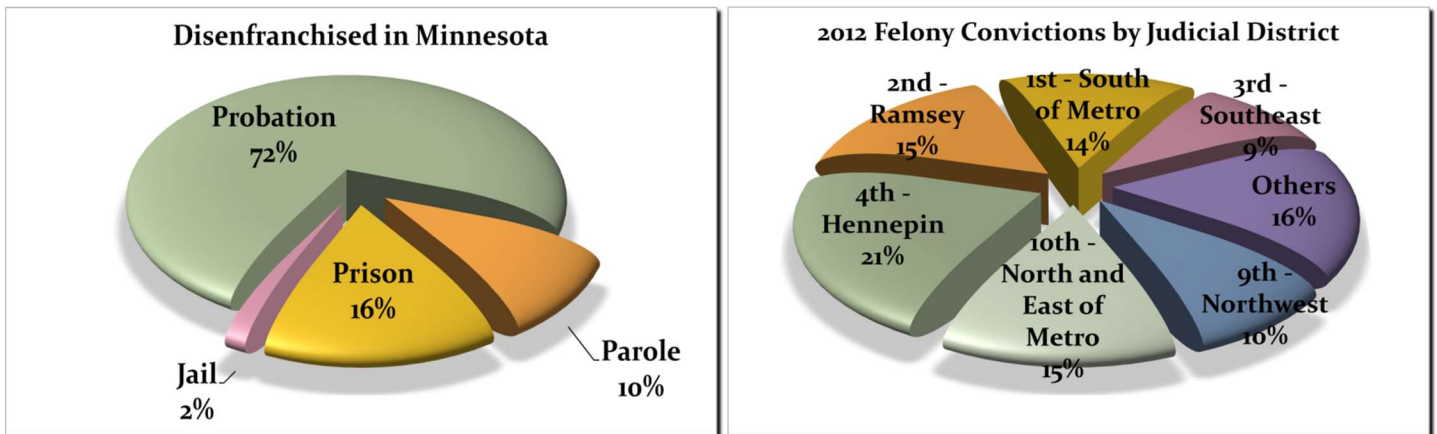


DISENFRANCHISEMENT IN MINNESOTA

Over 47,000 Minnesotans living in our communities are prohibited from voting.

Minnesotans convicted of any felony offense¹ are not allowed to vote until they have been discharged from their entire sentence, including any term of probation or supervised release.²

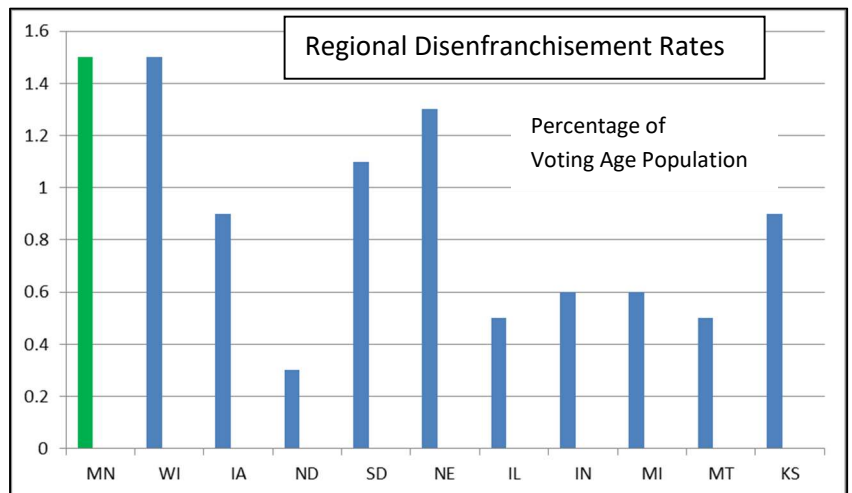
About 57,000 Minnesotans are unable to vote due to a felony conviction, 1.54% of the voting age population. About 47,000 (82%) live in the community on probation or supervised release. An estimated 64% live outside of Hennepin and Ramsey Counties. Of those living in the community, 32,827 are white, 9,045 are African American, 2,822 are Hispanic and 2,765 are Native American.



COMPARISON TO OTHER STATES³

20 States have less restrictive policies, either never disenfranchising (Maine and Vermont), or allowing those on probation and/or parole to vote. Minnesota's policy is shared by a total of 19 states. 11 States have more restrictive policies in that they somehow limit voting even after community supervision is completed.

Minnesota has one of the two highest rates of disenfranchisement in the region and the 22nd highest rate in the U.S. We have the 8th highest rate of correctional control in the U.S.



¹ A felony is any crime that carries a sentence of one year or greater.

² Minnesota's constitution bars from voting those "convicted of treason or felony until restored to civil rights." Minnesota Statute 609.165 restores the "full right to vote and hold office" upon discharge from sentence.

³ Thirteen states disenfranchise only those who are incarcerated - Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Utah. Five states only disenfranchise those in prison or on parole but allow those on probation to vote - California, Colorado, Connecticut, New York, and South Dakota.

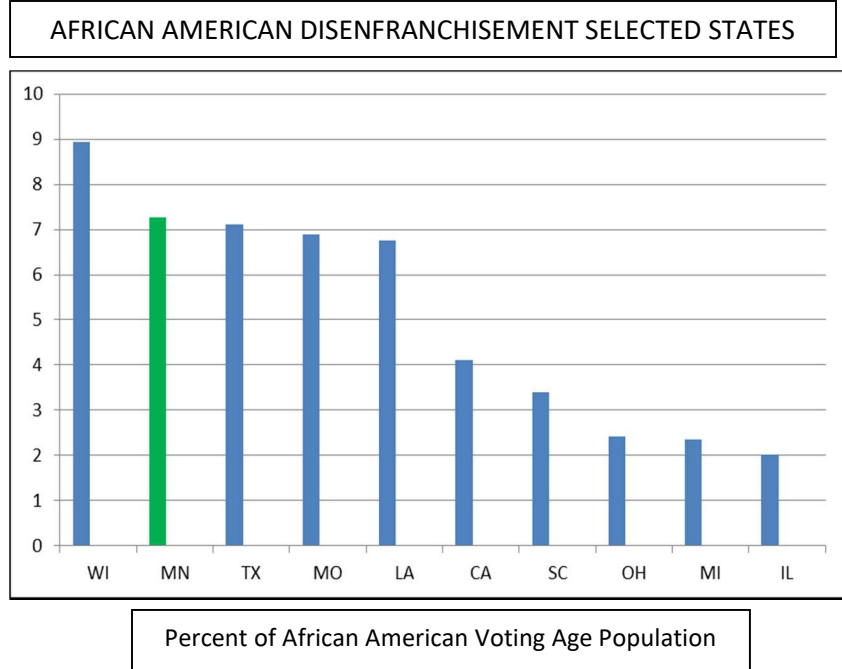
DISENFRANCHISEMENT IN MINNESOTA

RACIAL DISPARITIES

7.4% of African-American and 5.9% of American Indian Minnesotans are disenfranchised (compared to 1.1% of White Minnesotans). Of those living in the community, 32,827 are white, 9,045 are African American, 2,822 are Hispanic and 2,765 are Native American.

Minnesota has the 15th highest rate of African American disenfranchisement in the U.S.

About 13,000 (22% of total) disenfranchised are African American. Restoring the vote to probationers and parolees would reduce Minnesota's African American disenfranchisement rate to 2.7%.



HISTORY

Felony disenfranchisement is rooted in ancient practices of “civil death” for those convicted of capital offenses. Minnesota’s constitution also restricted the right to vote to white males over 21 and “Persons of Indian blood...who have adopted the language customs and habits of civilization.”

Criminal Justice System Changes -

In the 1860’s:

- There were less than 75 felony crimes in statute.
- There was no probation, so all felony convictions resulted in prison.
- Just over 30 people were in prison, about .02 percent of the voting age population then.

Today:

- There are 368 felony crimes.
- About 75 percent of felony convictions result in probation.
- About 1.5% percent of our voting age population is disenfranchised.

Minnesota’s disenfranchisement rate is over four times what it was just 40 years ago.

DISENFRANCHISEMENT IN MINNESOTA

PUBLIC SAFETY

Allowing people to vote while on community supervision may help to reduce recidivism – research links pro-social activities like voting to desistance in crime, individuals interviewed about losing the right to vote express a feeling of being an “outsider” because they cannot vote, and empirical study shows some correlation between voting and lower recidivism.⁴ A 2011 report by the Florida Parole Commission found that ex-prisoners who had their voting rights restored had recidivism rates of 11% compared to 33% for those who did not have their rights restored.⁵ The public safety benefit of pro-social activity is a primary reason allowing those on community supervision to vote is supported by the American Probation and Parole Association. There is no evidence that disenfranchisement deters crime or lowers recidivism.

AN EXAMPLE FOR CHILDREN

Research has shown that children are more likely to vote as adults if they are raised by parents who engage in the voting process⁶ - it follows that the positive example of voting may lead to more positive participation in the community generally.

ELECTION INTEGRITY AND SIMPLICITY

According to a survey of county attorneys, in the 2008 elections 1,179 voters were investigated for voting while serving a felony sentence, resulting in 26 convictions. Many people are unsure of their voting rights. For example, in the 2012 election, a probation officer incorrectly told a young woman that her five-year felony marijuana possession stay of adjudication sentence prevented her from voting. It took the Minnesota Supreme Court to provide clarification that she in fact could legally vote. Changing the law to disenfranchise those convicted of a felony only while in prison or jail will create a simple and bright line that will reduce this confusion and save taxpayer funded law enforcement resources.

PUBLIC OPINION

A 2002 national opinion poll showed that 60 percent of Americans surveyed supported restoring voting rights to parolees and probationers.⁷

⁴ See Uggen, C. and Manza, J. (2004) “Voting and Subsequent Crime and Arrest: Evidence from a Community Sample,” *Columbia Human Rights Law Review*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 193-215, 213.

⁵ Report can be accessed here: <https://www.fcor.state.fl.us/docs/reports/2009-2010ClemencyReport.pdf>

⁶ Gittell, Mary. "Empowering Citizens: From Social Citizenship to Social Capital." *Social Capital and Social Citizenship*. England: Lexington Books, 2003.

⁷ Manza, Jeff, Clem Brooks, and Christopher Uggen. 2004. “Public Attitudes Toward Felon Disenfranchisement in the United States.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 68:276-87.

DISENFRANCHISEMENT IN MINNESOTA

SUPPORTERS

Restore the Vote Minnesota is a coalition of groups who support restoring the right to vote for those living in the community to make the law more clear and equitable, responsibly use taxpayer money, and encourage positive participation.

Public Safety/Legal

Conflict Resolution Center of Minnesota
Legal Rights Center
Minnesota Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
Minnesota Community Corrections Association
Minnesota Corrections Association
Minnesota County Attorneys Association
State Public Defender

Faith Based Organizations

ISIAH
Jewish Community Action
Joint Religious Legislative Coalition
MICAH (Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing)
Minnesota Catholic Conference
Minnesota Council of Churches
Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance

Direct Service Organizations

African Immigrant Services
American Indian OIC
Goodwill/Easter Seals MN
L.I.F.E. In Recovery
Mad Dads Minneapolis
MN Adult and Teen Challenge
MN Community Action Partnership
Minnesota Recovery Connection
The Neighborhood Hub
Northside Achievement Zone
Open Access Connections
St. Stephen's Human Services
Twin Cities Rise!

Civic Engagement and Advocacy Organizations

Advocates for Human Rights
African American Leadership Forum
ACLU of Minnesota
Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota
Citizens for Election Integrity Minnesota
Common Cause MN
Council on Crime and Justice
Growth & Justice
Integrated Community Solutions, Inc.
Land Stewardship Project
League of Women Voters Minnesota
Liberty Minnesota
Minneapolis Branch of the NAACP
Minneapolis Urban League
Minnesota AFL-CIO
Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
Minnesota Council on Foundations
Minnesota Innocence Project
MN Neighborhoods Organizing for Change (NOC)
MN Second Chance Coalition
Minnesotans Standing Together to End Poverty (MNSTEP)
MPIRG
NAACP St. Paul Branch
Organizing Apprenticeship Project
People For the American Way
Prison Policy Initiative
R3 Collaborative
Republican Liberty Caucus Minnesota
SEIU Local 26
TakeAction Minnesota
Ten25Fifty
World Without Genocide

For more information contact Mark Haase, 612-819-0738, or Sarah Walker, 612-220-2070, or contact@restorethevotemn.org.