



MINNESOTA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

May 8, 2019

Members of the State Government Finance Conference Committee:

The Minnesota Catholic Conference, the public policy voice for the Catholic Church in Minnesota, writes to ask that you support the "Restore the Vote" language from the House Omnibus State Government Finance bill (HF 1935) and include it in the conference committee report.

We believe that giving those who have offended an opportunity to participate in important decisions affecting their community will 1) help renew the lives of those who have offended; 2) reduce recidivism; 3) help foster the political participation of minority communities disproportionately affected by the current criminal justice system; and 4) conserve public resources.

Ensuring the well-being of our communities means working for the reintegration of offenders, who are often banished to the margins of society. These offenders already face a significant amount of collateral consequences once they leave prison or jail. They often have difficulties finding housing or employment. Many stumble between incarceration and substance abuse because of the difficulty they face in rebuilding their lives. The inability to vote and have a say in decisions that affect their families is just another stumbling block for those trying to reconcile themselves to their communities. Voter restoration is an important step in giving people chances to forge new pathways in their lives.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to make sure that the restoration of a civil right to vote provision is in the final agreed-upon bill sent to Governor Walz. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Jason A. Adkins
Executive Director