

Good morning! For the record my name is Emily Persaud- Zamora and I am the Executive Director of Silver State Voices, Silver State Voices serves as an organizing table of 501 c3 organizations committed to conducting civic engagement work throughout the state of Nevada. Part of our civic engagement work is leading the Voting Rights coalition *Let Nevadans Vote*. Today as a coalition we stand in support of AB431 and thank Speaker Frierson for carrying this bill that would restore democracy to thousands of Nevadans.

AB431 is a piece of legislation that will automatically restore voting rights to people with felony convictions after they have completed their sentences. Under current law tens of thousands of citizens in Nevada—people who have successfully completed their sentences and are living, working, and paying taxes in their communities—are prevented from voting by past felony convictions. Nevada has the ninth highest disenfranchisement rate in the country.

As of 2016, nearly 90,000 people in Nevada are banned from voting due to a past felony conviction, more than 4% of the total voting age population. As of 2016, Nevada was one of just 9 states with a disenfranchisement rate over 4% and the percentage of the population banned from voting in Nevada is 60% higher than the national average. The problem is only getting worse—the number of Nevadans who cannot vote has doubled since 1980. In 1980, that number was under 2%.

When we are not supporting Voting Rights legislation at the legislature, many of our partners are conducting voter registration programs in the field. In 2018, we collectively registered over 127,000 Nevadans to vote. The second highest reason why people would not register to vote with our partners is because they were formerly incarcerated. We also had numerous encounters where our canvassers would talk to individuals who qualify but did not know what the current process to restore their rights was. Passing AB431 would minimize confusion on which formerly incarcerated are able to vote, and would simplify this work for election administration.

Today, we urge you to pass AB431 to restore the ability to participate in democracy to thousands of Nevadans. Thank you for your time!