



# Refuse to be *silenced.*

DEFEND DEMOCRACY  
ENACT TENNESSEE  
SB0589/HB547

For more information, visit [www.defenddemocracyTN.org](http://www.defenddemocracyTN.org).



# TN RIGHT to Vote

PROTECT OUR DEMOCRACY BY ALLOWING CONVICTED FELONS TO HAVE  
ACCESS TO THEIR RIGHT TO VOTE!

## PROBLEM:

Tennessee currently has the FOURTH highest level of voter disenfranchisement in the U.S.\* This means that individuals who have been convicted of felony crimes cannot exercise their right to vote given to ALL citizens per Section 1, Amendment XV of the United States Constitution. This means that currently the TN State Constitution is in direct refusal to follow the U.S. Constitutional rights of convicted felons.

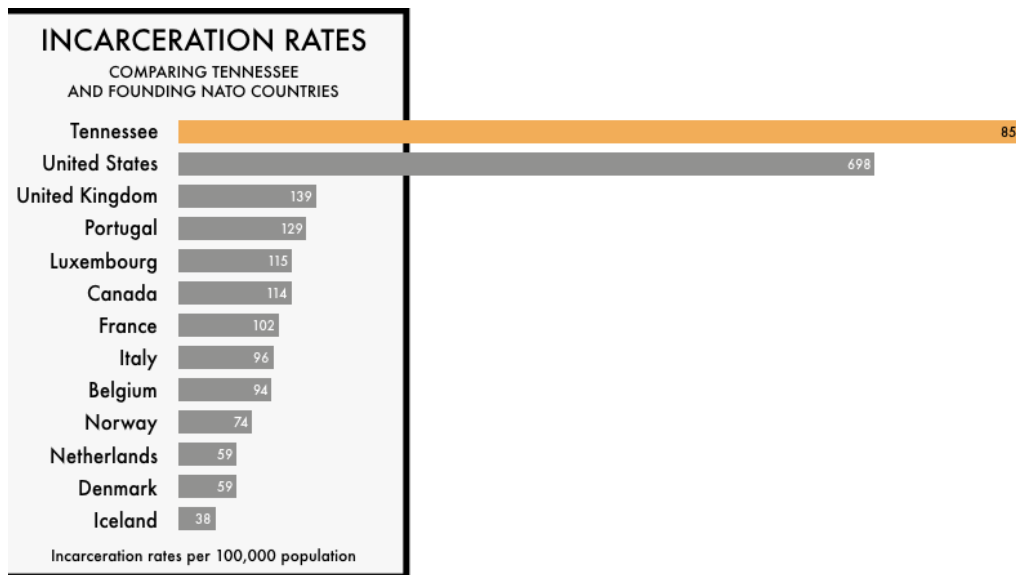
7% of the adult population in Tennessee has, as of 2016 lost their right to vote due to voter disenfranchisement.\* This may seem like a small number, but it is a direct negligence of those individual's constitutional rights.

## CURRENT GAPS:

SB0589 will correct the unconstitutional injustice currently in the aforementioned TN Constitution, specifically Article 4, Section 2. Where it states that specific dates and crimes of individuals will lose their right to vote permanently.\* This removal of any citizen's right to vote is illegal, and needs to be addressed, it is YOUR responsibility as elected officials of your constituents, INCLUDING those convicted felons that this policy directly effects.

Currently, the Tennessee Secretary of State identifies these infamous crimes convictions to be permanently disenfranchised\*:

- Voter Fraud
- Any Degree of Murder or Rape
- Sexual offenses where the victim was a minor.
- Treason
- Felonies involving bribery, misconduct involving public officials or employees, or interference of government operations.



Source: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2018.html>

## Proposed Change:

SB0589 proposes an amendment that upon completion of the sentence for said convicted felon, the individual will IMMEDIATELY be able to register and exercise their right to vote given by the U.S. Constitution.

There has been great success in Vermont and other states with this process of restoring voting rights to convicted felons. There have been greater rates of civic engagement and allowing felons to vote has lowered the recidivism rates in Maine and Vermont.

## Conclusion:

Part of YOUR constituents, convicted felons of the aforementioned crimes, are directly affected every day by being denied their right to vote. Do your part and support SB0589, when you swore into office, you swore to uphold the constitution above all else. Do that, by voting yes on SB0589!

## Footnotes\*:

1. Felony Disenfranchisement. The Equity Alliance. (2019, March 24). <https://theequityalliance.org/tag/felony-disenfranchisement/>
2. Uggen, C., Larson, R., & Shannon, S. (2016, October 19). 6 million lost voters: State-level estimates of felony disenfranchisement, 2016. The Sentencing Project. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/6-million-lost-voters-state-level-estimates-felony-disenfranchisement-2016/>
3. ProCon.org. (2020, September 14). State felon voting laws - Felon voting. <https://felonvoting.procon.org/state-felon-voting-laws/>

