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# Our Voice Matters

## Support ACA 6: Restore Voting Rights to Californians on Parole

We, the undersigned signatories, strongly urge the California State Legislature to stand on the right side of history and eliminate a major, unnecessary, and discriminatory barrier to full participation in our democracy: the denial of the right to vote while on parole.

We urge you to support the passage of ACA 6, a bill that will give California voters the opportunity to automatically restore voting rights to people immediately upon their release from prison. Fourteen states and the District of Columbia have already adopted similar policies. But here, in California—a state known for its supposedly progressive, inclusive, and forward-thinking approach to democracy—voting rights are denied to people released from prison, often for many years, simply because they are on parole. Although state and federal legislatures, city councils, and boards of education routinely make decisions that directly impact the lives of people on parole and their loved ones, voting rights are denied to this vulnerable population, as though their voices and lives don't matter. People convicted of similar offenses, but who are on probation rather than parole, do not face the same voting restrictions and exclusions.

Felony disenfranchisement has a long, sordid, and discriminatory history in the United States. California is no exception. It is no secret that racial bias has infected policing, prosecution, and sentencing here in this state and that centuries of oppression and unequal opportunities have contributed to disparate incarceration rates in California and beyond. African Americans comprise only 6% of this state's adult population, yet comprise 26% of the parole population. By contrast, white Californians comprise 41% of the adult population and comprise 26% of the parole population. While we firmly believe that people of all colors deserve the right to vote, we are especially cognizant of the discriminatory impact of felony disenfranchisement laws, including California's policy of denying voting rights to people as they strive to rebuild their lives following release from prison. We ought to be doing everything we possibly can to encourage people to vote and to support their efforts to contribute to their communities following release from prison, rather than barring them from the ballot and denying them an opportunity, individually and collectively, to improve their life chances and the well-being of their families, loved ones, and communities.

We ask the entire legislature to embrace this issue regardless of party affiliation. Voting is central to any democracy. If we do not extend the right to vote to all people, then we cannot call ourselves a truly equitable and inclusive democracy.

**Aaliyah Muhammad**  
All of Us or None - Sacramento

**Abdi Soltani**  
ACLU of Northern California

**Alex Banda**  
All of Us or None - Fresno

**Alex Mallick**  
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**Amber-Rose Howard**  
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**Angela Y. Davis**  
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Community Coalition

**Azadeh Zohrabi**  
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**Brendon Woods**  
Alameda County Public Defender

**Brett Shears**  
Vote Allies

**Cheavon Brown**  
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**Christina Mendoza**  
Families United to End LWOP (FUEL)

**Critical Resistance**  
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Justice Reinvestment Coalition

**Darris Young**  
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**Daryl Atkinson**  
Forward Justice

**Dauras Cyprian**  
All of Us or None - National

**Dennis Malone**  
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**Diana Block**  
California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP)

**Dolores Huerta**  
Dolores Huerta Foundation for Community Organizing

**Don Specter**  
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**Dorsey Nunn**  
Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC)

**Elena Chávez Quezada**  
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Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC)

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**Jason Bell**  
Project Rebound

**Jay Jordan**  
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**Jeremy Mann**  
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) - Bay Area

**Jessica Nowlan**  
Young Women Freedom Center

**Jim Lindburg**  
Friends Committee on Legislation in California

**John Jones III**  
Just Cities

**Karen McDaniel**  
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**Karen Shain**  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights (LCCR)

**Keith Carson**  
Alameda County Board of Supervisors - District 5

**Kim Carter**  
Time for Change Foundation

**Kevin McCarty**  
California Assemblymember - 7th District

**Kimberly Richman, Ph.D**  
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**Laura Magnani**  
American Friends Service Committee

**Lisa Yarbrough-Gauthier**  
Mayor, East Palo Alto

**Linda Evans**  
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**Marc Philpart**  
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**Maureen Kildee**  
East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC)

**Michael McBride**  
Live Free

**Michael Tubbs**  
Mayor, Stockton

**Michelle Alexander**  
Author, The New Jim Crow

**Mike Gipson**  
California Assemblymember - 64th District

**Nancy Skinner**  
California State Senator - 9th District

**Nate Williams**  
Choices for Freedom

**Norris Henderson & Bruce Riley**  
Voice of the Experienced (VOTE) - New Orleans

**Nube Brown**  
California Prison Focus

**Rodney Holcombe**  
Drug Policy Alliance (DPA)

**Raj Jayadev**  
Silicon Valley De-Bug

**Sammy Nuñez**  
Fathers and Family of San Joaquin

**Sevgi Fernandez**  
Together We Stand

**Smadar Ben-Natan**  
Center for Middle Eastern Studies, U.C. Berkeley

**Stacy Villalobos**  
Legal Aid at Work

**Susan Burton**  
A New Way of Life / All of Us or None - Los Angeles

**Taina Vargas-Edmond**  
Initiate Justice

**Tamisha Walker**  
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**Tshaka Barrows**  
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**Ucedrah Osby**  
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**United States Student Association**  
USSA

**Vonya Quarles**  
Starting Over, Inc. / All of Us or None - Riverside

**Wendy Still**  
Alameda County Probation Department

**Zachary Norris**  
Ella Baker Center



File Photo: Legal Services for Prisoners with Children  
All of Us or None Organizer Sandra Johnson (right) registers people to vote in Oakland, CA.



Photo: Peter DaSilva, New York Times  
All of Us or None members meet with State Senator Nancy Skinner (center) to advocate for legislation to remove barriers to successful reentry from incarceration.



Photo: Office of Assemblymember Kevin McCarty  
Dauras Cyprian, currently on parole, calls for the restoration of his and 50,000 other Californians' voting rights at the ACA 6 press conference in Sacramento - January 28, 2019

This ad has been paid for by All of Us or None and other formerly incarcerated people who believe that voting is an inalienable right and that both communities and our democracy will be strengthened by our participation.

