

(The parole system was replaced in 1984 by a system of fixed or “determinate” sentences. The ISRB is the body that replaced the parole board, and it makes decisions affecting sentences entered before July 1, 1984 for individuals who served time in prison.) You can contact the ISRB in one of several ways. You can apply for restoration of your voting rights online at its website: [www.srb.wa.gov](http://www.srb.wa.gov), call at 360.493.9266, or write to the address below.

Indeterminate Sentence Review Board  
4317 Sixth Avenue SE  
P.O. Box 40907  
Olympia, WA 98504-0907

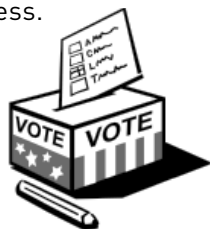
If you have questions or experience problems with the ISRB, please contact the ACLU.

#### • IF YOU WERE CONVICTED IN FEDERAL COURT

If you were convicted in federal court your voting rights in Washington must be restored by the Washington State Clemency and Pardons Board (CPB). We recommend that you contact the ACLU to find out about this process.

#### • IF YOU WERE CONVICTED IN ANOTHER STATE

Each state has its own rules about voting rights restoration. If your rights have been restored in the state where you were convicted and it would be legal to vote there, you are eligible to register and vote in Washington. If your voting rights have not been restored in the state of conviction, you can seek restoration in Washington State through the Clemency and Pardons Board. We recommend that you contact the ACLU to find out about this process.



## GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

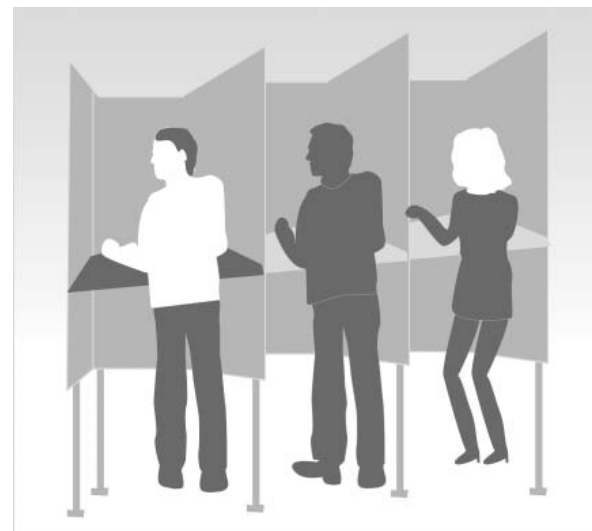
**COD (Certificate of Discharge):** The court order document that officially restores an individual’s civil rights after a felony conviction, including the right to vote, serve on a jury, sign initiative petitions, and run for public office. The COD does not restore the right to possess firearms.

**CPB (Washington State Clemency and Pardons Board):** This body has authority to restore voting rights to individuals who have been convicted of felonies in (1) federal court or (2) in other state courts in cases where voting rights were not restored in the state of conviction. The board consists of five members appointed by the governor; and meets four times a year.

**DOC (Washington State Department of Corrections):** The agency that usually administers incarceration, probation and supervision for felony convictions. If an individual has completed all the terms required by the judgment and sentence before the end of DOC supervision, the DOC should notify the court to issue a COD.

**ISRB (Indeterminate Sentence Review Board):** This body has authority to restore voting rights for individuals convicted of felonies committed before July 1, 1984 who served time in prison. The ISRB is the successor to the old parole board, which was eliminated when fixed (“determinate”) sentences were adopted.

**LFOs (Legal Financial Obligations):** All monetary obligations required to be paid by a judgment and sentence. For help in determining whether your LFOs have been fully paid, call the ACLU.



# How Ex-Felons Can Restore Their Right to Vote in Washington

## WHY DOES THE ACLU CARE ABOUT RESTORING VOTING RIGHTS?

The ACLU opposes taking the vote away from any citizen. The ACLU believes that the right to vote should be restored when an individual is released from prison. In Washington, however, individuals who have served their incarceration and probation are not allowed to vote until they have paid all court-imposed fines and monetary penalties. The ACLU believes that an individual's right to vote should not be conditioned upon one's economic status or financial ability to pay fines or penalties. We have challenged Washington's law in court, and are awaiting a decision from the Washington Supreme Court. For further information about your right to vote while this case is pending, please go to [www.aclu-wa.org](http://www.aclu-wa.org).

Under current law, persons convicted of a felony in Washington lose their right to vote until they have completed all the conditions of their sentence, including their legal financial obligations (LFOs). LFOs include restitution, victim fees, court costs, and interest, which accrues at 12 percent from the date of conviction. Over 150,000 Washington citizens cannot vote because of a prior felony conviction.

The ACLU of Washington has been working to pass legislation that would restore ex-felons' right to vote in Washington except when they are serving time in prison. The proposed legislation ensures that an individual's right to vote, the most important role and responsibility one has as a citizen, is not conditioned upon income. Under the bill, ex-felons would still be required to pay court-imposed financial obligations; but those obligations would not prohibit them from voting.



## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The ACLU wants to help you! Contact the ACLU if you have served your time and:

- You want to vote but don't know if you are eligible to do so;
- You want to vote but still owe money for fines, restitution, or other financial obligations imposed at sentencing;
- You want to vote and have completed all sentence requirements, but have not received a certificate of discharge; or
- You want to register to vote but don't know how.

Call the ACLU at 206.624.2184, e-mail [legal@aclu-wa.org](mailto:legal@aclu-wa.org), or write to us at the following address:

ACLU of Washington Foundation  
705 - 2nd Avenue, 3rd Floor  
Seattle, WA 98104  
ATTN: Legal Department

## HOW CAN I GET BACK MY RIGHT TO VOTE?

What you need to do to regain the right to vote depends on when and where you were convicted. The following information explains how to get your right to vote back.

### • IF YOU WERE CONVICTED BY A STATE COURT IN WASHINGTON FOR A CRIME COMMITTED IN 1984 OR LATER AND HAVE SATISFIED ALL OF YOUR LEGAL FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS (LFOs)

#### The Certificate of Discharge (COD)

If you paid your LFOs while you were still in Department of Corrections (DOC) custody or under supervision, the DOC will notify the sentencing court that all terms of the sentence have been completed, and the court should then issue a certificate of discharge (COD). The court sends a copy to your last known address listed in the court file. If you are living at a different address than you

were at the time of conviction, you may not have received the COD. You should check with the court or contact the ACLU to confirm whether or not a discharge was issued. If a COD has been issued, your right to vote is restored, and you may register to vote. Your right to serve on a jury, sign initiatives, and run for office is also restored. The COD does not restore the right to possess firearms and does not clear your conviction from criminal background checks.

#### Petitioning the Court for a COD

If you paid your LFOs after the DOC terminated your supervision, you have a right to petition the court for a certificate of discharge. Unfortunately, this is not an automatic process that only requires you to fill out a form. The discharge petition is a legal procedure – like a divorce, or a request to change your legal name – in which you are formally asking a court to do something that will affect your rights under the law.

The petition process requires you to show in writing that you have fulfilled all of the terms of your sentence, including probation or community supervision, payment of LFOs, and completion of any other requirements such as community services hours or education programs (like substance abuse, anger management, or other counseling). The discharge petition process is often much more confusing than necessary, which is one reason the ACLU is working to change the law. **It is not unusual for individuals to encounter problems with this process, but do not be discouraged. Contact the ACLU, and we can help.**

### • IF YOU WERE CONVICTED BY A STATE COURT IN WASHINGTON FOR A CRIME COMMITTED PRIOR TO 1984 AND WERE INCARCERATED IN A STATE PRISON

You can ask the Indeterminate Sentencing Review Board (ISRB) to restore your right to vote.