



African American Leadership Forum

SUPPORT FOR SF 26 – RESTORE THE VOTE

February 3, 2023

Chair Ron Latz
Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee
Room G-15 Minnesota State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Latz and Committee Members:

The African American Leadership Forum (AALF) is a movement of more than 5,000 African American leaders, institutions, allies, and systems that come together to collaborate and champion solutions that improve the lives and experiences of African Americans in Minnesota. Our goal is to build a just and healthy society that works equally well for everyone. For 15 years, AALF Twin Cities has harnessed the collective power of Black communities to solve complex social problems.

The African American Leadership Forum expresses its strong support for SF 26, which will restore voting rights to those impacted by the criminal justice system, particularly those with a past criminal conviction who have been released and reintegrated back into society. Restoring the vote is as much of a racial justice issue as it is about expanding our democracy. In 2018, the Pew Research Center found that despite Black Americans being 12% of the U.S. adult population, they were 33% of the U.S. prison population ([link](#)). As such, restoring the vote will mean expanding voting rights for thousands of Black Minnesotans who have been denied their basic rights as citizens. Justice-impacted individuals are influenced by the decisions of duly elected bodies daily, yet in Minnesota, many cannot hold their elected officials accountable and participate in the elections process because of their criminal record. By supporting HF 28, our state can more effectively practice true democracy, which is the ability for all individuals to be adequately represented and served by their public bodies.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill and we ask for your support of SF 26.

Sincerely,

Amber Jones
Managing Director, Policy Impact
African American Leadership Forum