

February 1, 2023

Chair Ron Latz  
Minnesota Senate Building  
95 University Ave West  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Latz and Members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

World Without Genocide supports SF26 to restore voting rights to convicted felons who have served their prison sentences.

Voting is a human right and a civil right. Those who are stripped of this right are denied a fundamental part of their dignity and their citizenship. They experience a form of civil death: being deprived of an essential and meaningful aspect of their identity as citizens of a democracy.

The United States remains the only democracy in the world where most convicted felons who have served their prison sentences are denied the right to vote for many years, and in some cases, for the rest of their lives. Voting disenfranchisement stands in stark contrast with U.S. obligations to human rights under international law.

The United Nations Human Rights Committee condemns U.S. voting disenfranchisement policies and calls for the restoration of full voting rights to citizens who have served their prison sentences.

Voting disenfranchisement laws are rooted in and perpetuate the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow. Historically, these laws emerged to limit the power of Black citizens by restricting their voting rights. According to Human Rights Watch, 13 % of all Black Americans, or 2.6 million people, are disenfranchised, representing more than half of the total disenfranchised population.

The statistics in Minnesota are alarming. It is estimated that nearly 60,000 Minnesotans are currently deprived of their voting rights, particularly Black and Latinx people.

It is time for Minnesota to end this egregious practice.

Thank you for supporting SF26.

Sincerely,



Ellen J. Kennedy, Ph.D., Executive Director