

AMENDMENT 4 Voting Restoration Amendment Ballot Language:

This amendment restores the voting rights of Floridians with felony convictions after they complete all terms of their sentence including parole or probation. The amendment would not apply to those convicted of murder or sexual offenses, who would continue to be permanently barred from voting unless the Governor and Cabinet vote to restore their voting rights on a case by case basis.

How The Amendment Reached The Ballot: Citizen Initiative

What Your Vote Means: A **Yes** vote on this measure: restores the right to vote for people who have committed felony crimes. There are some exceptions for individuals who have committed murder or a felony sexual offense.

A **No** vote on this measure: continues the practice of requiring former felons to petition the state for restoration of voting rights.

Pro: Amendment 4 re-enfranchises individuals who have paid their debt to society in full. The current system is a bottleneck that has disparate impacts on felons who are unable to navigate the system. Felons must wait 5-10 years before fully regaining their voting rights. Currently, Floridians can only regain the ability to vote by applying to the state Office of Executive Clemency. Then they must be granted a hearing and successfully plead their case. It appears that this ability comes without clear guidelines or standards, but rather at the behest of those members of the Clemency Board. In February, the United States District Court declared the current voter restoration process unconstitutional. The court held that Florida's system is arbitrary and tramples on the rights of citizens. The case is making its way through the appeals process, but the issue is unlikely to be resolved by the November election. This measure would mean an estimated 1.5 million Floridians regain their right to vote. Moreover, this step would reintegrate these individuals back into both the Florida society and economy. A study conducted by the Washington Economics Group found that Florida's annual economy could see a boost of \$365 million, and an increase of 3,400 jobs if Amendment 4 were to pass.

Con: A process to award felons their voting rights already exists in Florida. The system approved by the State in 2011 created an avenue for those who committed nonviolent crimes to restore their rights. In order to apply, these individuals must wait a minimum of five years before the restoration process takes place. Opponents argue that Amendment 4 is an all or nothing proposal that does not consider the nature of the crime committed. For opponents, the nature of the crime plays a crucial role in restoring the right to vote. Amendment 4 only makes exceptions for murder and sexual offenses.