



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## Executive Department

### Order for the Restoration of Rights

#### TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME – GREETINGS:

**WHEREAS**, Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution of Virginia requires that all those convicted of a felony be deprived of their civil right to vote unless they have their civil rights restored by the Governor or other appropriate authority; and

**WHEREAS**, it is estimated that approximately 206,000 Virginians are permanently disenfranchised from participating in political life due to prior felony convictions even after completing their court-ordered sentences; and

**WHEREAS**, such disenfranchisement disproportionately affects racial minorities and economically disadvantaged Virginians; and

**WHEREAS**, Virginians have increasingly advanced the ideals of equality of all races and peoples, while rejecting the indefinite and unforgiving stigmatization of persons who have committed past criminal acts; and

**WHEREAS**, the Governor is empowered by Article V, Section 12 of the Constitution of Virginia “to remove political disabilities consequent upon conviction,” thus to restore the political rights of any persons disqualified by Article II, Section 1; and

**WHEREAS**, the power granted to the Governor under Article V, Section 12 to remove political disabilities is absolute and without any limitation not expressly stated within the Constitution of Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, all individuals who have served the terms of their incarceration and any periods of supervised release deserve to re-enter society on fair and just terms, including to participate in the political and economic advancement of Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, the restoration of civil rights has been noted to achieve substantial benefits for those individuals who have felt long-exiled from mainstream life; and

**WHEREAS**, democracy is strengthened by having more citizens involved in the political process;

**NOW, THEREFORE,** I, Terence R. McAuliffe, Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, by and through the authority vested in me under Article V, Section 12 of the Constitution of Virginia, do hereby order the removal of the political disabilities consequent upon conviction of a felony imposed by Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution of Virginia from all those individuals who have, as of this 22nd day of April 2016, (1) completed their sentences of incarceration for any and all felony convictions; and (2) completed their sentences of supervised release, including probation and parole, for any and all felony convictions. The civil rights restored by this Order are: (1) the right to vote; (2) the right to hold public office; (3) the right to serve on a jury; and (4) the right to act as a notary public. Nothing in this Order restores the right to ship, transport, possess, or receive firearms.

Given under my hand and under the Lesser Seal of the Commonwealth at Richmond, on April 22, 2016 in the 240th year of the Commonwealth.



Governor of Virginia



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Secretary of the Commonwealth