



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, this policy has permanently disenfranchised hundreds of thousands of Virginians who have completed 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, between the 1st day of May 2016 and the 31st day of May 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 register 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 June 24, 2016, in the 240th year of the Commonwealth.

Governor of Virginia

Secretary of the Commonwealth