

# Felony Voter Disenfranchisement

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# Basic Issue

- Prisoners, felons can't vote
- See SDCL Chapter 12-4, Registration of voters
- 12-4-18 "Any voter ... serving a sentence for a felony conviction shall be removed from the voter registration records."
- Entire sentence must be completed before voting, even restitution
- Felons are disproportionately poor, minorities

# Impossible Restitution

- Being caged hurts job skills, social skills
- Background checks make housing and job hard to obtain
- Even small restitution difficult on minimum wage
- Most restitution never completed. See <https://www.sdnewswatch.org/stories/many-crime-victims-in-s-d-not-being-paid-restitution-they-are-owed/>
- No job, no restitution, no vote

# Making Second Class Citizens

- Define many crimes as felonies
- Target poor, minorities with felonies
- Require restitution from convicts
- Prevent convicts from voting

# Bigger Question

- Real goal of “criminal justice” system?
- Punish or reduce crime?
- Mean prisons, slave labor, no training, no healing, addiction is a crime, punish for lifetime with background checks, no voting
- Or
- Education, healing, re-integration

# Even Bigger Question

- Who does government work for?
- Alcohol, drug, prison industries?
- Lobbyists, campaign donors, super rich?
- Or
- Average citizen?
- Common good?

# City Supersedes State

- Sioux Falls can supersede South Dakota law
- An example is city law "93.030 Modification of state law"
- "For the purposes of this subchapter, SDCL 32-30-12 is modified to read ..."

# Recommendations

- Sioux Falls should legally reject the disenfranchisement of SDCL Chapter 12-4, Registration of voters
- Convicts, prisoners should vote
- They are still citizens
- Discourage recidivism
- Discourage class warfare, poverty, second class mentality
- Promote reintegration into society



Garden  
Beauty,  
Enjoy  
Life,  
Smile

