

**LETTER IN SUPPORT OF
THE DEMOCRACY RESTORATION ACT (S. 2235/H.R. 4459)
FROM RELIGIOUS AND FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS**

July 22, 2014

Dear Member of Congress:

We, the undersigned religious organizations, reflecting diverse faith traditions, in one voice write to urge you to support and co-sponsor the Democracy Restoration Act, a bill which seeks to restore federal voting rights to millions of Americans living and working in our communities who have been disenfranchised because of a criminal conviction in their past. As people of faith, we believe all people are created in God's image. We are deeply concerned that state disenfranchisement laws continue to deprive our neighbors of their fundamental right to vote and relegate them to second-class citizenship.

From Joseph saving untold numbers from famine, to Peter being the rock upon which Christ's church was built, our scriptures bear powerful witness of the great achievements that can be made by persons who have spent time in prison. It is consistent with the best of our democratic values and our moral heritage to encourage the formerly incarcerated to participate constructively with their communities in ways such as voting.

Accordingly, we join the many Americans who believe that continuing to deny the right to vote to millions of our fellow citizens who have rejoined our communities is unwise and unjust. Our support for the Democracy Restoration Act rests squarely on our obligation to be merciful and forgiving, our commitment to treat others with the respect and dignity that God's children deserve, and our steadfast belief in the human capacity for redemption.

We applaud your efforts to restore the franchise to persons who have been released from prison, and we urge you to pass the Democracy Restoration Act.

Yours truly,

The Aleph Institute, an organization for Jewish renewal

Christian Reformed Church of North America

Crossroad Bible Institute

Evangelicals for Social Action

The Institute for Prison Ministries at the Billy Graham Center

Masjid An-Nur, an Islamic center in Minneapolis, MN

Mennonite Central Committee

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

PICO (People Improving Communities through Organizing) National Network

Presbyterian Church USA, Office of Public Witness, Washington, DC

Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.

Restorative Justice Ministries Network of North America

Sojourners, a Christian ministry based in Washington, DC

Union for Reform Judaism

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society

Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations