

1 [Supporting California State Proposition 17 - Free the Vote - November 3, 2020, Ballot]

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3 **Resolution supporting California State Proposition 17, Free the Vote, on the November**  
4 **3, 2020, ballot.**

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6 WHEREAS, Voting is a cornerstone of our democracy, a system of government that is  
7 stronger when it is fair and inclusive, and stripping the right to vote from formerly incarcerated  
8 people is a form of voter suppression that is deeply out of step with California’s values; and

9 WHEREAS, When a person completes their prison sentence and is released to parole,  
10 they should be encouraged to re-enter society and have a stake in their community, including  
11 the freedom to vote; and

12 WHEREAS, California Penal Code, Section 3000 describes parole as a period that is  
13 critical to “positive citizenship,” and voting is a fundamental right of citizenship; and

14 WHEREAS, Studies have repeatedly shown that states that allow people to vote  
15 immediately upon their release from prison have lower rates of recidivism, meaning that re-  
16 entering people are less likely to return to prison when their voices are included in the voting  
17 process; and

18 WHEREAS, Felony disenfranchisement is part of a legacy of Jim Crow segregation  
19 and, because of continuing racial discrimination in policing and incarceration, continues to  
20 disproportionately lock Black and Brown people out of civic engagement; and

21 WHEREAS, About 50,000 Californians have completed their prison sentences and are  
22 living in their communities, working, raising families, and paying taxes, yet because they are  
23 on parole they are currently prohibited from voting on the policies and representation that  
24 affect their daily lives; and

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1           WHEREAS, California currently lags behind 19 other states and the District of  
2 Columbia, all which either automatically restore voting rights upon release from prison or have  
3 no felony disenfranchisement whatsoever; and

4           WHEREAS, Assembly Member Kevin McCarty (D-Sacramento) authored and  
5 introduced Assembly Constitutional Amendment No. 6 in 2019, which passed the Assembly  
6 with a two-thirds majority in September of 2019 and the Senate by 28-9 in June 2020, thereby  
7 receiving the two-thirds required for a constitutional amendment; on June 25, 2020, Governor  
8 Gavin Newsom signed ACA-6 to place this constitutional amendment on the November 3,  
9 2020, California General Election ballot as Proposition 17; and

10          WHEREAS, Currently, the California State Constitution does not allow people who  
11 have committed felonies from voting until the end of their imprisonment and parole;  
12 Proposition 17 amends the language of the constitution and allows people who committed  
13 felonies to vote after they complete their prison term and while they are on parole; according  
14 to the National Conference of State Legislatures, currently sixteen states plus the District of  
15 Columbia allow people to vote immediately upon their release from incarceration; two states,  
16 Maine and Vermont, allow felons to keep their voting rights during and after incarceration; and

17          WHEREAS, In a 2019 “Democracy Needs Everyone” report, Initiate Justice found that  
18 roughly 40,000 people in California are on parole for a felony and do not have the right to vote  
19 [<https://www.initiatejustice.org/project/democracy-needs-everyone/>]; the organization  
20 conducted a survey of people who are incarcerated and on parole and found that 37% voted  
21 before incarceration and 98% said they would vote if they could; and

22          WHEREAS, Proposition 17 will end the disenfranchisement of otherwise-eligible  
23 Californians on parole by amending the state constitution; now, therefore, be it

24          RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco hereby formally endorses  
25 Proposition 17, Free the Vote Act, on the November 3, 2020, ballot; and, be it

1           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco go on record  
2 in support of Proposition 17, Free the Vote Act, on the November 3, 2020, ballot; and, be it

3           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco urges other  
4 municipalities to support Proposition 17, Free the Vote Act, on the November 3, 2020, ballot.

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