

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/iowa-governor-proposes-to-restore-voting-rights-for-people-with-felony-convictions>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

[Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds announced today](#) that she will propose a constitutional amendment to restore voting rights for people with felony conviction histories.

The decision was formally announced during [Reynolds Condition of the State address to the Iowa Legislature earlier today](#). The governor also proposed other criminal justice reform measures as part of the address, including a law that would protect employers from lawsuits for hiring people with justice system involvement, a constitutional amendment on victims rights, and the creation of a home-building program to provide skilled workforce training for incarcerated people.

"I don't believe that voting rights should be forever stripped, and I don't believe restoration should be in the hands of a single person," Governor Reynolds said in her prepared remarks.

Iowa, Kentucky, and Virginia all have lifetime bans in their constitutions, and all currently allow the governor to restore voting rights to individuals.

A number of states have worked to restore voting rights for people with conviction histories in recent years. [Voters in Florida approved a ballot measure in 2018](#) that overturned the states lifetime voting bana move that restored voting rights for an estimated 1.4 million people in that state. [In 2017, Alabama Governor Kay Ivey signed a law that restored the voting rights of thousands of people. At least two states are pushing to restore voting rights](#) for all citizens age 18 and olderincluding those in prisonwhich is the current policy in Maine, Puerto Rico, and Vermont. [Polls show that a majority of Americans support these measures](#).

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