

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 011
(A-24)

Introduced by: Medical Student Section

Subject: Voter Protections During and After Incarceration

Referred to: Reference Committee on Amendments to Constitution and Bylaws

1 Whereas, our American Medical Association “acknowledges voting is a social determinant of
2 health and significantly contributes to the analyses of other social determinants of health as a
3 key metric”; and
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5 Whereas, our AMA “recognizes that gerrymandering which disenfranchises
6 individuals/communities limits access to health care, including but not limited to the expansion
7 of comprehensive medical insurance coverage, and negatively impacts health outcomes”; and
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9 Whereas, our AMA “will collaborate with appropriate stakeholders and provide resources to
10 firmly establish a relationship between voter participation and health outcomes”; and
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12 Whereas, states that increase access to voting experience stronger public health outcomes and
13 better self-reported health status of individuals, while reduced access to voting has been linked
14 to poorer health outcomes and decreased health coverage¹⁻⁴; and
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16 Whereas, barriers to voting in the United States have been associated with an increased
17 likelihood of not having access to health care coverage, thereby making the government less
18 accountable to the needs of its people⁵; and
19

20 Whereas, past expansion of suffrage resulted in improved maternal outcomes following
21 women’s suffrage in 1920 and reduced Black infant mortality correlated with the Voting Rights
22 Act of 1965, due to policies passed by legislators after the addition of these voters⁶; and
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24 Whereas, 48 states currently restrict the right to vote of 4.6 million citizens convicted beyond a
25 misdemeanor, and many states permanently bar them from voting⁷⁻⁹; and
26

27 Whereas, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in August 2023 that a state violated the US
28 Constitution by inflicting cruel and unusual punishment by stripping the right to vote from
29 citizens who were convicted¹⁰; and
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31 Whereas, since 2020, 7 states passed laws allowing citizens to vote while on parole⁷; and
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33 Whereas, Black and Latine people are imprisoned 5 times and 1.3 times as much as white
34 people, respectively¹¹; and

1 Whereas, racial inequities in incarceration extend to voter rights for citizens who are
2 incarcerated as well, with 5.3% of Black incarcerated citizens banned compared to 1.5% of non-
3 Black incarcerated citizens⁹; and
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5 Whereas, Black men comprise over one-third of the total disenfranchised population and could
6 comprise as much as 40% in states that restrict incarcerated citizens' right to vote,
7 demonstrating that restriction of voter rights in incarceration substantially contributes to the
8 disenfranchisement of Black citizens¹²; therefore be it
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10 RESOLVED, that our American Medical Association support the continuation and restoration of
11 voting rights for citizens currently or formerly incarcerated, support efforts ensuring their ability
12 to exercise their vote during and after incarceration and oppose efforts to restrict their voting
13 rights. (New HOD Policy)
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Fiscal Note: Minimal - less than \$1,000

Received: 4/24/2024

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RELEVANT AMA Policy

Mental Illness and the Right to Vote H-65.971

Our AMA will advocate for the repeal of laws that deny persons with mental illness the right to vote based on membership in a class based on illness. [Res. 202, A-10; Reaffirmed: BOT Rep. 04, A-20]

Support for Safe and Equitable Access to Voting H-440.805

1. Our AMA supports measures to facilitate safe and equitable access to voting as a harm-reduction strategy to safeguard public health and mitigate unnecessary risk of infectious disease transmission by measures including but not limited to: (a) extending polling hours; (b) increasing the number of polling locations; (c) extending early voting periods; (d) mail-in ballot postage that is free or prepaid by the government; (e) adequate resourcing of the United States Postal Service and election operational procedures; (f) improved access to drop off locations for mail-in or early ballots; and (g) use of a P.O. box for voter registration.

2. Our AMA opposes requirements for voters to stipulate a reason in order to receive a ballot by mail and other constraints for eligible voters to vote-by-mail.
3. Our AMA: (a) acknowledges voting is a social determinant of health and significantly contributes to the analyses of other social determinants of health as a key metric; (b) recognizes that gerrymandering which disenfranchises individuals/communities limits access to health care, including but not limited to the expansion of comprehensive medical insurance coverage, and negatively impacts health outcomes; and (c) will collaborate with appropriate stakeholders and provide resources to firmly establish a relationship between voter participation and health outcomes. [Res. 18, I-21; Appended: Res. 422, A-22]

Support for Democracy H-65.947

Our AMA: (1) unequivocally supports the democratic process, wherein representatives are regularly chosen through free and fair elections, as essential for maximizing the health and well-being of all Americans; (2) will strongly oppose attempts to subvert the democratic process; and (3) asserts that every candidate for political office and every officeholder in the public trust must support the democratic process and never take steps or support steps by others to subvert it. [Res. 433, A-22]

DRAFT