

RESOLUTION NO. R2013-66

**A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF NORTH MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA
URGING AND ENCOURAGING THE FLORIDA
LEGISLATURE TO REPEAL ALL LAWS WHICH DENY
THE RESTORATION OF VOTING RIGHTS.**

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2011, the Florida Rules of Executive Clemency were toughened, as the automatic restoration of civil rights and the ability to vote was no longer granted for any convicted criminal offense; and

WHEREAS, currently, all individuals convicted of any felony now need to apply for executive clemency after a five-year waiting period, and individuals convicted of certain felonies, such as murder, assault, child abuse, drug trafficking and arson are subject to a seven-year waiting period and a clemency board hearing to determine whether or not the ability to vote will be restored; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, an estimated 5.85 million people in the United States could not vote due to a felony conviction, an increase from the 2004 total of 5.26 million and the highest number since at least 1960; and

WHEREAS, as of 2010, Florida has disenfranchised 1,541,602 citizens due to a felony conviction, which amounts to the disenfranchisement of 10.42% of the state's voting age population and 23.3% of Florida's African-American voting age population, the highest in the nation; and

WHEREAS, in 38 states, most felons get voting rights restored automatically upon completion of his or her sentence, with some states making an exception for violent crimes; and

WHEREAS, once an individual has served his or her time, the scarlet letter precluding the participation in our democracy should be removed from his or her head; and

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WHEREAS, those involved in the restoration of one's voting rights have experienced ex-felons who want to become involved in their communities, want to be able to cast their vote in an election and want to have a say in the government to make a difference in a very positive manner; and

WHEREAS, many believe that the only reason not to let felons vote is to stigmatize them or to continue punishing them, and if allowed to vote, they would be less likely to return to prison and more likely to become reintegrated into their communities; and

WHEREAS, voting is a fundamental right and a cornerstone of our democracy, yet millions of American have had their right to vote revoked for periods ranging from the time spent incarcerated to a lifetime; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council believe that the automatic restoration of voting rights will give a person a meaningful way to re-enter society, allow them to participate in our democracy, and incentivize good behavior.

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of North Miami Beach, Florida.

Section 1. The Mayor and Council of the City of North Miami Beach, Florida, hereby strongly urge the Florida State Legislature to repeal all legislation that denies the restoration of voting.

Section 2. The City Clerk is hereby directed to transmit a certified copy of this Resolution to: Governor Rick Scott; all State Representatives and State Senators; Michael Sittig, Executive Director of the Florida League of Cities, Inc.; Richard Kuper, Esquire, Executive Director of the Miami-Dade County League of Cities, Inc.; and to the presiding Officers and Council members of the municipalities in Miami-Dade County.

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Section 3. The Mayor and Council of the City of North Miami Beach, Florida, hereby direct the City's state lobbyists to advocate for legislation set forth in Section 1.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the City of North Miami Beach City Council at the regular meeting assembled this ____ **day of October, 2013.**

ATTEST:

PAMELA L. LATIMORE
CITY CLERK

(CITY SEAL)

GEORGE VALLEJO
MAYOR

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

DARCEE S. SIEGEL
CITY ATTORNEY

Sponsored by: Councilwoman Barbara M. Kramer
Mayor and Council