

April shouldn't have to wait.



"My name is April Browning. I was convicted of a non-violent felony offense at the age of 19. I have never, in my life, had the privilege of participating in what is the most basic of democratic rights. The right to vote.

Much has changed in my life over the last 15 years. I have been able to maintain a GPA of 3.5, and by the end of this summer I will have earned two degrees. I have developed a strong work ethic, and I do my best to give back to the community through my work with Central Kentucky Council for Peace and Justice.

Most importantly, within that 15 years, my greatest achievement has been becoming a mother to a child that has shown me what the word love truly means. Through this experience my life has been forever changed. This singular important life event has shaped me and will continue to make me strive to be better. My son's name is Elijah. He will be 13 this year.

I have recently completed my probation sentence. My debt to society is paid in full, and I want to be able to vote. I've been waiting for years. You see, I believe in our democracy. I believe in the power of voting. I also believe that it is my duty as a parent to show my son the importance of voting through the practice of it. To be able to show him how very important it is to raise our voices through the democratic process is immeasurable. My voting will lay the foundation and set the path for Elijah to follow suit.

If a waiting period were enacted I would never have that opportunity. In five years my son will become a man and he will go off to college. With a waiting period, he would never see me participate in our democracy. He would never see me fully reintegrated into society after all of the hard work I've done to get there. I worry, what message would that send him? Would he ever truly understand what it means to cast that ballot? And the children of the 380,000 disenfranchised voters in the state of KY...Will they too grow up not knowing that their voice matters?

Please, help me teach my child to participate in our democracy. Help me teach my son to vote. Restore voting rights to people who have paid their debt to society without a waiting period. Please."

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Sentence served, debt paid in full.

Let's pass HB 70 as a clean bill--no waiting period, no attachments.

Teddi waited long enough. Our elders shouldn't have to wait.



“Voting is one way to have some control over your life. When you have paid your debt to society, you should no longer be in custody. Voting is important because it means your life is your own again.

It would have meant a lot to me if I had gotten my rights back as soon as I served out. My life felt like an oxymoron. I was registering voters and encouraging people to vote, but I couldn't vote myself.

When you don't have your rights it is as if you are still serving time. When you commit a felony and go to prison or jail, you are given a date when you are supposed to be released from custody. When you have completed that sentence and paid all of the debt you have been asked to pay, and you still can't vote, it is as if you are still imprisoned.

I'm 74. At my age, having a waiting period is a death sentence. Plain and simple: it's a death sentence. I'm past my life expectancy and I'm still imprisoned if I can't vote. There are plenty of people who are my age who can't vote because of a felony charge and adding a waiting period is giving them a death sentence.”

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A waiting period would make Kentucky an outlier. Nebraska is the only state to impose a waiting period after a person has completed his or her full sentence before they become eligible to vote.

