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Secretary of State Alex Padilla Sponsors new Constitutional Amendment to Restore Voting Rights to Parolees

SACRAMENTO – Secretary of State Alex Padilla joined Assemblymembers Kevin McCarty (D-Sacramento), Sydney Kamlager-Dove (D-Los Angeles), Rob Bonta (D-Oakland), Ash Kalra (D-San Jose) and criminal justice reform advocates to introduce ACA 6, known as the Free the Vote Act, legislation aimed to restore the right to vote for people on parole. In California, a person’s right to vote is suspended when they are incarcerated or on parole for a felony conviction. As a result, approximately 48,600 Californians on parole are unable to vote in state, federal, or local elections.

“Civic participation is foundational to a sense of community—and it can play a major role in reducing recidivism,” Secretary of State Alex Padilla said. “If we are serious about reintegrating the formerly incarcerated into society, we should not be shunning them from democracy. California has led the way in expanding voting rights that are fundamental to American citizenship.”

Nationwide, there are an estimated six million Americans that are unable to vote because of felony disenfranchisement. Formerly incarcerated people on parole are working, paying taxes, and raising their families in our communities. However because of a conviction, they are excluded from participating in the democratic voting process.

“It is time to restore the right to vote for individuals who have served their time,” said Assemblymember Kevin McCarty (D-Sacramento). “ACA 6 will eliminate an arbitrary barrier to voting, reduce recidivism and give formerly incarcerated people an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to become productive, contributing members of our society.”

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