To the Members of the Minnesota House and Senate,

As clergy and faith leaders across Christian, Jewish, and Muslim traditions, representing congregations across Minnesota, we urge our state elected officials to support the full restoration of voting rights to Minnesotans in our communities on probation and parole.

Faith leaders, like most Minnesotans, recognize that people who have experienced incarceration need to experience restoration and redemption in society. Restoring their rights of citizenship, restores them of their voice and dignity.

Every citizen of the United States has an obligation and a duty to vote. Voting is a right that cannot and should not be taken away from any citizen of the U.S. No matter your race, area code, or income, every Minnesota citizen has an equal say in what happens in our state and our community. Denying Minnesotans the ability to vote not only denies a right, but it denies them the ability to fulfill their civic obligation to our democracy.

Minnesota has long been a leader when it comes to democracy and restoring the right to vote will bring the freedom to vote back to over 55,000 Minnesotans. All of their voices matter and we can't leave any of them behind.

Over 55,000 Minnesota citizens have had their freedom to vote blocked, even though they have completed their prison sentence and returned home to raise families, work jobs, pay taxes and contribute to society. They should be encouraged to reenter society and have a stake in their community, not be punished by having their voting rights denied.

Furthermore, well documented biases in the criminal justice system mean that poor people and people of color are more likely to be incarcerated than their white counterparts. For many people, life after prison means partial citizenship, as formerly incarcerated people often experience limited opportunities for employment, housing, and voting. As we work to reimagine our criminal legal system to be more fair and equitable, one of the first changes we can make is to restore voting rights to people who are most impacted by that system, inside and outside prisons.
We can't have an elected government that represents all of us when some groups are being excluded from our elections and denied the ability to participate in our democracy.

We're counting on your leadership at this crucial moment, because there is no freedom without the freedom to vote.

The Undersigned:

Rev. Keith Olstad, Minneapolis
Mr. Randall Romsdahl, Minnetonka
Rev. James Erlandson, Maplewood
Rev. Jen Nagel, Minneapolis
Rev. Anita Hill, Saint Paul
Rev. Bonnie Forsman, Eagan
Rev. Sandy Dodson, South St Paul
Rev. Sarah Campbell, Minneapolis
Rev. Thomas von Fischer, Wayzata
Mr. Bruce Pederson, St Louis Park
Rev. Dr. Justin Lind-Ayres, St Louis Park
Deacon Dr. Amy Blumenshine, Minneapolis
Rev. Jane McBride, Minneapolis
Rev. Dwight Wagenius, Minneapolis
Rev. Martha Bardwell, Minneapolis
Pastor Henry Gunnink, Inver Grove Heights
Fr. Dale Korogi, Minneapolis
Rev. Carolyn Fure-Slocum, Northfield
Rev. James Alberts, Saint Joseph
Rev. Amy Wick Moore, New Brighton
Rev. Peter Weston Miller, Saint Paul
Rev. RICHARD SELLERS, Minneapolis
Rev. Todd Lippert, Northfield
Rev. Emily Goldthwaite, Minneapolis
Ms. melissa miller, Golden Valley
Rev. Donald Fulton, Minneapolis
Rev. Robert Nelson, Rochester
Rev. Paula Nordhem, Burnsville
Rev. Mary Shaffer, St Louis Park
Rev. Dr. Joy McDonald Coltvet, Saint Paul
Rev. Andrew Davis, Saint Peter
Rev. Rebecca Voelkel, Minneapolis
Rev. Eliot Howard, Edina
Rev. Leah Rosso, Sartell
Rev. Justin Chapman, Rochester
Dr. David Wetzell, Andover
Pastor Robert Dahl, Willmar
Rev. BARBARA MARTIN, Minneapolis
Rev. Luke Stevens-Royer, Rochester
Min. JaNae Bates, Saint Paul
Rev. Rex McKee, St Louis Park
Ms. Ann Beane, Minneapolis
Rev. Ruth MacKenzie, Saint Paul
Rev. Suzanne Owens-Pike, Minneapolis
Rev. Jan Skogstrom, Minneapolis
Rev. Miriam Samuelson-Roberts, Minneapolis
Ms. Renee Domeier, Saint Cloud
Imam Mohamed Omar, Bloomington
Pastor Nathan Roberts, Minneapolis
Rabbi Emma Kippley-Ogman, Saint Paul
Rev. Molly Cox, Minneapolis
Sister Betty Kenny, Saint Paul
Imam Asad Zaman, Saint Paul
Mr. Vernon Rice, Mounds View
Father Paul Jaroszeski, Ramsey
Rev. Robert Lyndes, New Brighton
Rev. Dr. Elisabeth Johnson, Saint Paul
Ms. Karen Johnson, Minneapolis
Rev. Alan Bray, Saint Peter
Rev. Nancy Anderson, Minneapolis
Rev. Theresa Roos, Richfield
Rev. Dr. Gary Titusdahl, Minneapolis
Rev. Howard Bell, Eagan
Rev. Margaret Thompson, Columbia Heights
Deacon Carl Valdez, Minneapolis
Rev. Karen Larson, Minneapolis
Rev. Jennifer Rome, Saint Paul
Pastor Chrissie Carver, Rosemount
Rev. John Omans, Waseca
Rev. Matthias Peterson-Brandt, Saint Paul
Rev. Lisa Janke, Rochester
Rev. Carol Shaffer, Rochester
Rev. Gregory Dana, Saint Paul
Rev. Dr. Glenn Monson, Rochester
Rev. Bonnie Wilcox, Saint Paul
Pastor Jenna Daniels, Saint Paul
Rev. Hans Jorgensen, Roseville
Rev. Christa Forsythe, Atwater
Deacon Carole Joyce, Rochester
Dr. Hassan Hassan, Saint Paul
Rev. Elijah McDavid III, Minneapolis
Rev. Jerry McAfee Minneapolis