



**For Immediate Release**  
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**LDF Statement on New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's Plan to Restore Voting Rights to People with Felony Convictions**

On Wednesday, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signed an executive order giving consideration for a conditional pardon to restore voting rights to individuals with felony convictions who are on parole. [Leah Aden](#), Senior Counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), provided the following statement:

“Governor Cuomo’s executive order giving consideration for a conditional pardon to restore voting rights to 35,000 individuals with felony convictions who are on parole is a long-overdue first step forward. Fifteen years ago, LDF challenged the New York statute that disenfranchises individuals with felony convictions because it is well-known that felony disfranchisement denies the right to vote disproportionately to Black and Latino individuals and diminishes the voting strength of Black and Latino communities. Indeed, it is never lost on us that states with overwhelming white populations like Vermont and Maine permit people with felony convictions to vote while incarcerated. And although we’ve yet to succeed in striking down New York and other states’ racially discriminatory felony disenfranchisement laws, Governor Cuomo’s executive order is important because it chips away at the edges. So, while we applaud Governor Cuomo for exercising his executive authority to restore voting rights for certain individuals, we maintain the firm belief that the fundamental right to vote should not depend on who’s in office and how they use their power. We urge the Governor and the New York Legislature to permanently repeal New York’s felony disfranchisement laws because full voter participation is a true bellwether of a healthy and well-functioning democracy.”

For information about LDF’s Free the Vote campaign, visit:  
<http://www.naacpldf.org/case-issue/free-vote-people-felony-convictions>

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*Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*

*(NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.*