

## **Statement on Florida Officials' Plans to Remove Returning Citizens from Florida's Voter Roll**

*The move is in direct violation of Florida state law*

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**Tallahassee, Fla.** – With less than 18 days until the 2020 General Election, the Florida Division of Elections made plans to remove returning citizens who owe legal financial obligations from Florida's voter roll in direct violation of Florida's 30-day notice period.

**The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), ACLU of Florida, Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law and NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. responded with the following:**

“On the eve of a consequential election, Florida officials wrongfully endeavor to scare as many eligible voters as possible away from voting. Florida's Division of Elections intends to send whatever unreliable information it has to Florida Supervisors of Elections ('SOEs') to merely suggest some registered voters may owe legal financial obligations ('LFOs').

“Under a recent appellate court decision, Florida, for now, can require people with most felony convictions to pay LFOs arising from their conviction(s) before regaining their right to vote. Yet Florida had not removed people from the voter rolls for LFOs since the Florida Legislature undercut the will of Florida's people and enacted a law creating this pay-to-vote system on July 1, 2019.

“It is now long past when they are permitted to do so. The Division of Elections' untimely effort to disqualify currently eligible voters requires a 30-day notice period and cannot be completed before Election Day. Importantly, Florida knows it can only remove an otherwise eligible voter through unequivocally credible and reliable information of the otherwise eligible voter's outstanding LFOs. It additionally must give the voter notice and an opportunity to contest the state's information. All of this takes time—seven days for the SOEs to review and act on the Division of Elections' information and 30 days for each voter to participate in a hearing to contest the State's information, which we know—and a federal trial court recognized—is flawed. In short, there is insufficient time before Election Day for any voter to be removed from the rolls under Florida state law requirements. Florida's proposed action is simply an attempt to scare people with felony convictions away from voting and constitutes voter intimidation—par for the course in Florida.

“Yet as the Eleventh Circuit made clear: until Florida ‘complete[s] its screening’ of the 85,000 registrations it received ‘from felons who believe[d] they were re enfranchised’ at the time of trial, ‘it will not have credible and reliable information supporting anyone’s removal from the voter rolls, and all 85,000 felons will be entitled to vote.’ Jones v. Governor of Florida, No. 20-12003, 2020 WL 5493770, at \*2 (11th Cir. Sept. 11, 2020).”