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May 6, 2003

State of Nevada
Senate Judiciary Committee
Legislative Building
401 South Carson St
Carson City, NV 89701

Re: AB 337

Judiciary Committee Members:

On behalf of Reno/Sparks N.A.A.C.P I am writing to express our support for bill AB 337. Felony voting restrictions are the last vestige of voting prohibitions! When the United States was founded, only wealthy white men were allowed to vote. Women, minorities, illiterates, and the poor were excluded. These restrictions have all been eliminated over time, after much debate and rancor. People who have served their time, and have been released from prison, are the last Americans to be denied their basic right to vote.

In the state of Nevada, writing one bad check may result in you losing your voting privileges for life!

With voting such an integral part of becoming a productive member of American society, we should be encouraging ex-felons to vote, not prohibiting them.

The Reno/Sparks Branch #1112 N.A.A.C.P. urges the passage of AB 337.

We further express our belief that by not passing AB 337 those persons released from prison will be looked at (and they will feel) as outcasts. They will not understand the continued psychological imprisonment. Once the debt to society has been paid (as any other debt) that person should be debt free and not stigmatized for life as a bad risk in the voting process.

We appreciate your commitment to confront and resolve this most complex issue and urge you to consider the above points.

Sincerely,



Mary F. Valencia Wilson
Political Acton Chair
Reno/Sparks N.A.A.C.P