SUPPORT HJ2/SJ2

Topic: Constitutional Amendment for Automatic Rights Restoration
Bill Patrons: Del. Elizabeth Bennett-Parker and Sen. Mamie Locke

OVERVIEW:

HJ 2 and SJ 2: These are constitutional amendments to **automatically restore the right to vote** to otherwise eligible voters who have been disenfranchised due to a felony conviction and are re-entering society after completing their sentence.

REASONS TO SUPPORT:

- Virginia is one of the only states in the nation that permanently strips the rights of anyone convicted of a felony, requiring these citizens to petition the state to have their voting rights restored upon release.
- The practice, a remnant of racist Jim Crow laws and the only voter suppression tactic from this era still in use today, was enshrined in Virginia's Constitution in 1902 with the explicit goal of repressing Black Virginians' voting power, alongside other disenfranchisement tactics like literacy tests and poll taxes.
- Because of this practice, today more than 260,000 Virginians are disenfranchised (roughly 5% of the eligible voting population), and Black Virginians are disproportionately impacted.
- Environmental protection is dependent on having a strong democracy without barriers to the ballot box where all Virginians have a voice and a vote in protecting their communities and fighting for solutions to issues they face.

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