

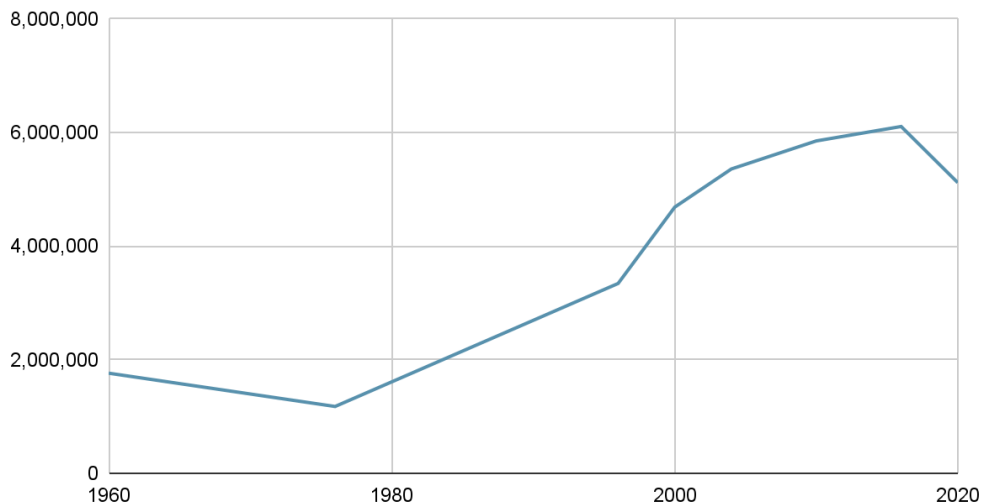
Impacts on Voting Rights

Over the past 25 years, half of U.S. states have modified their laws and practices to expand voting access to people with felony convictions. Despite these important reforms, 5.2 million Americans remain disenfranchised, making up 2.3% of the U.S. voting age population.²

As of 2020, approximately 5.17 million people are disenfranchised due to a felony conviction, a figure that has declined by almost 15% since 2016, as states adopted new policies to address this practice.

In 1976, there were an estimated 1.17 million people disenfranchised; in 1996, 3.34 million, and in 2020, 5.17 million. Currently, approximately 2.27 percent of the total US voting age population is disenfranchised due to a current or previous felony conviction.⁵

Number of Disenfranchised Voters, 1960-2020



One out of 44 adults – 2.27 percent of the total U.S. voting eligible population – is disenfranchised due to a current or previous felony conviction.

Individuals who have completed their sentences in the eleven states that disenfranchise at least some people post-sentence make up 43% of the entire disenfranchised population, totaling 2.23 million people.

Rates of disenfranchisement vary dramatically by state due to broad variations in voting restrictions. In three states – Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee – more than 8% of the adult population, one of every thirteen people, is disenfranchised.²

Nearly 900,000 Floridians who have completed their sentences remain disenfranchised, despite a 2018 ballot referendum that promised to restore their voting rights. Florida thus remains the nation’s disenfranchisement leader in absolute numbers, with over 1.1 million people currently banned from voting – often because they cannot afford to pay court-ordered monetary sanctions or because the state is not obligated to tell them the amount of their sanction.

African American disenfranchisement rates vary significantly by state. In seven states – Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wyoming – more than one in seven African Americans is disenfranchised, twice the national average for African Americans.

Endnotes

² Locked Out. (2020). ESTIMATES OF PEOPLE DENIED VOTING RIGHTS DUE TO A FELONY CONVICTION. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Locked-Out-2020.pdf>

⁵ Voting rights. Legal Action Center. (2022, March 24). Retrieved from <https://www.lac.org/work/priorities/restoring-opportunities/voting-rights>

