



RESTORATION COALITION

FLORIDA RIGHTS RESTORATION COALITION JOINS AMENDMENT 4 COURT CASE

-Organization Focuses on Protecting the Interests of Florida's Returning Citizen Community-

ORLANDO - Today, on September 27, 2019, the [Florida Rights Restoration Coalition](#) (FRRC) filed a proposed *amicus curiae* brief with the U.S. District Court of the Northern District of Florida in *Jones v. DeSantis*. This brief allows the state's leading returning citizen organization to provide important and neutral input into the court case surrounding [SB 7066](#), the law passed to clarify Florida's Amendment 4, the amendment that lifted the state's lifetime ban on voting for people with past felony convictions. The brief focuses on several key areas:

The Impact on Returning Citizens

SB 7066 requires returning citizens to pay all restitution, fines, and fees included in their sentence before voting rights are restored. It also includes two major *alternative* avenues to resolving these financial obligations:

- A judge can modify a returning citizen's sentence to modify obligations entirely or remove them from the sentence. This modification provision allows returning citizens to seek to alleviate or remove the barrier that financial obligations may pose to their voting eligibility.
- The law mandates that sentence completion is based on requirements in the "four corners" of the sentencing document. This provision limits what financial obligations a person must pay in order to regain the right to vote.

The Sentence Modification and "Four-Corners" provisions created by SB 7066 will help returning citizens regain their right to vote, and therefore FRRC wants to see them protected.

The plaintiffs in the lawsuit, who claim that provisions of SB 7066 violate the U.S. constitution, have asked the court to enjoin, or temporarily hold, sections of the law where the sentence modification may be included. Today, through this brief, we are asking the court to protect the parts of the law allowing for sentence modification and "four corners" provisions, which are important pathways for returning citizens to complete their sentence and be eligible to vote - pathways won through hard fought legislative advocacy.

Thousands of voters could be disenfranchised if SB 7066's allowances for sentencing modifications and "four corners" provisions are blocked, even for just a few months. By the time any hold might be lifted, it could be too late for potential returning citizen voters to resolve their financial obligations and vote, especially concerning this year's local elections.

Those Closest to the Pain Are Closest to the Solution

Until today, there were no returning citizen-led organizations involved in the lawsuit surrounding SB 7066. Any serious discussion or debate about the rights of formerly convicted people should involve formerly convicted people. As FRRRC executive director Desmond Meade says, those closest to the pain are often closest to the solution. FRRRC is as an organization that has been led by returning citizens for nearly a decade, and is honored to add it's voice as a neutral party in this lawsuit to make sure the needs of the returning citizen community are known and respected in this crucial process. FRRRC is committed to putting people over politics and will continue to fight to ensure that those directly impacted are heard in the political process.

The Constitutionality of Amendment 4 is Secure

On August 15, the court asked about the possibility that Amendment 4 itself may be federally unconstitutional. FRRRC contends in its brief that neither the plaintiffs nor the defendants claim that Amendment 4 itself is unconstitutional. As such, the court should not consider this as a possibility. For nearly a decade, FRRRC has worked to create, pass and implement Amendment 4 and outlines clearly in its brief that the constitutionality of the Amendment is not before the court.

###