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## **Florida Rights Restoration Coalition Organizes Largest Ever State-Wide Early Vote March to the Polls**

*This Saturday, thousands of Returning Citizens will Stand Up, Be Heard and “Free the Vote.”*

**ORLANDO, FL** — On Saturday, October 24th, thousands of returning citizens across the state of Florida are reclaiming the right to vote on National Vote Early Day. The Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRC) is rallying returning citizens in 24 counties and 30 cities across Florida to stand up against voter suppression and celebrate democracy by marching to the polls. FRRC’s Free the Vote Day will mobilize returning citizens, family members, and their communities to cast their ballot and ensure their voices are heard. Many people will be voting for the first time, or the first time in a long time.

“Our Free the Vote march to the polls is a celebration of democracy and a rallying cry for justice in our communities,” said Desmond Meade, Executive Director of FRRC. “In 2018 we expanded democracy to returning citizens in Florida, but the vote is still not secure. This has been 150 years in the making and we won’t be intimidated easily. We will not stop until we free the vote for every one of Florida’s 1.4 million returning citizens who want to make their voice heard and their vote counted”

FRRC’s Free the Vote day events are part of a [state-wide bus tour](#) to energize registered returning citizens to vote this election. FRRC is partnering with When We All Vote Together Early Vote Weeks of Action to tell the story of returning citizens. In partnership with When We All Vote and More Than A Vote, the event will include food from World Central Kitchen and personal protective equipment (PPE).

“FRRC continues to travel across the state to educate and encourage returning citizens about their right to vote and the importance of being heard through the ballot this election,” said Neil Volz, Deputy Director of FRRC, “returning citizens know better than anyone the impact local officials like judges and sheriffs can have on a community and are likely to be directly impacted by their decisions—all of these issues are on the ballot this year.”

In 2018, more than two-thirds of Floridians voted in favor of restoring voting rights to 1.4 million returning citizens. Florida’s legislators, however, amended the law, adding a requirement that returning citizens pay their remaining fines and fees before re-enfranchisement. After the state moved to weaken the impact of Amendment 4, FRRC worked hard this election year to ensure as many returning citizens as possible are eligible to vote if they want to. FRRC, with the support of more than 86,000 donors nationwide, helped raise more than \$27 million to pay returning citizens’ fines and fees. They removed the voting obstacle for tens of thousands of returning citizens and plan to continue this work well past the 2020 election.



“FRRC has amplified the voice of returning citizens and helped us restore our right to participate in Democracy,” said Lance Wissinger, a Fort Myers resident and returning citizen, “since the first day of my sentence, I have been fighting to restore my rights, and now, thanks to the support of FRRC, I am able to vote this year in one of the most important elections of my lifetime. Now that my voting rights are restored, I am working to free the vote for every returning citizen in the state.”

Local leaders like Lance Wissinger are joined by influencers like Common, Steve Clifford and the Orlando Magic, LeBron James, the Miami Heat, the Miami Dolphins, John Legend, Michael Vick, Laquan Smith, Levi Strauss & Co., and countless others who are uplifting the voice of returning citizens in the modern day struggle for voting rights in America. Levi’s is partnering with Lyft to offer free rides to the polls for members of the FRRC community. Returning citizens will be able to access a ride credit from October 24th to November 3rd. More Than A Vote is also working with Lyft to provide ride access to the early voting location at Amway Center in Orlando for Orange County voters during the early voting period October 19 -- November 1.

### **About When We All Vote**

When We All Vote is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit launched by Co-Chair Michelle Obama in 2018 on a mission to change the culture around voting by bringing together citizens, institutions, brands, and organizations to increase participation in every election. They are also on a mission to close the race and age voting gap and empower all eligible voters to cast their ballot by harnessing grassroots energy, establishing strategic partnerships, and implementing digital organizing strategies. Learn more here.

### **About More Than A Vote**

More Than A Vote is a nonprofit social justice organization founded by Black athletes and artists dedicated to Black political empowerment. In 2020, More Than A Vote is focused on educating, energizing, and protecting Black voters and fighting the lies and systemic, racist voter suppression that stands in the way of Black voices being heard at the ballot box.

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### **About The Florida Rights Restoration Coalition**

FRRC is a grassroots, membership organization run by Returning Citizens (Formerly Convicted Persons) who are dedicated to ending the disenfranchisement and discrimination against people with convictions and creating a more comprehensive and humane reentry system that will enhance successful reentry, reduce recidivism, and increase public safety. For more information, visit <https://floridarrc.com/>.