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Nebraska Initiative. The initiative was created in the year 2003 by this committee, by the Government Committee, and consisted of members from all over the state with wide-ranging backgrounds and opinions. The initiative studied the issue of felons' voting rights, and then voted overwhelmingly to recommend legislation be introduced. And the final vote was 12 to 2 by that group. Current law provides that felons' voting rights can be restored only through the Board of Pardons. The process to apply for a pardon can be a long and difficult one. In fact, Nebraska is one of the few states that does not allow felons to vote after completing probation and/or parole. Let me tell you a few of the merits or reasons for restoring felons' right to vote. And actually, once you've left prison, I think technically it's correct to say "ex-felons," once you've completed your sentence. One of the reasons that we need to do this is that we are denying the right to vote to millions of people in our democracy throughout the United States. Not allowing felons to vote violates two core American values--the right to vote, and the ability of an individual to leave the past behind and start a new life. And some of you who have been in this Legislature for the past few years know that we've been moving more and more in the direction of community corrections and restoration to the community at different stages of the sentence. The U.S. Supreme Court held in Reynolds v. Sims in 1964 that the right to vote is a civil right. It's a civil right. It also would help to more effectively rehabilitate felons. Felons who have paid their debt to society by completing their sentence should be allowed to reintegrate back into the communities. Making these individuals feel a part of their community will only benefit them and society. As part of our movement toward community corrections and allowing felons to complete their sentence within the community, this provision seems like a logical next step. Once they have completed their sentence in the community, they should be given the opportunity to be fully integrated and active. Organizations such as the American Correctional Association and the American Bar Association are now urging states to allow felons to vote after completion of sentence, citing reasons such as rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The third reason that we should consider doing this is that disenfranchisement has a discriminatory impact. Voting right restrictions based on