



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Sen. Griffo statement on Executive Order restoring voting rights to felons on parole

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO April 19, 2018

| ISSUE: **VOTING, PAROLE, EXECUTIVE ORDER**

UTICA - State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-C-I-Rome, today released the following statement regarding Gov. Andrew Cuomo's Executive Order that restores voting rights to felons on parole:

"The Governor's Executive Order to allow convicted felons, post-release, to vote raises a number of concerns. Chief among them is the unintended consequences of pardoning approximately 35,000 convicted felons could have on our communities. This plan smells of good politics over good policy.

New York already has a mechanism in place that allows formerly convicted felons to vote. Under current law, an individual can vote after a felony conviction while on probation or once they have completed parole.

We are, in many cases, talking about individuals who have violated the rights of others. I don't feel that it is too much for us to ask that an individual complete the terms and conditions of their release, which is an extension of their imprisonment and reintegration into society, before they can resume the normal functions of society.

Statistics from New York State's own Division of Criminal Justice Services indicate that individuals who have been released from prison may not necessarily be ready to participate in society in an appropriate manner. Statewide in 2016, 12.3 percent of those on probation were arrested for a felony within one year, while 3.3 percent were arrested for violent felony offenses. Similarly, in 2015, the two year felony arrest rate was 18.5 percent, of which 5.3 percent were for violent felony offenses. Lastly, the three year felony arrest rate for individuals on probation was 23.3 percent in 2014, with 7 percent of those arrests being for violent felonies. These numbers have remained constant since 2007.

Here in New York State, the Legislature, which is elected by the people, has the responsibility for the implementation of law. This Executive Order, however, is another example of executive overreach by this Governor. Unfortunately, this is a regular occurrence with this administration, which has done all that it can to advance its desired policies while circumventing the Legislature.

We owe it to the people of the state of New York to ensure that policies affecting their lives are done in a thoughtful and appropriate way. I urge people to contact the Governor's office to express their concerns over the Governor's approach and his Executive Order."