Iowa mulls changing Constitution to restore voting rights of felons

The only state in the Midwest that does not automatically restore the voting rights of people with criminal felony convictions is considering a change in this policy, via an amendment to its Constitution. Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds proposed the idea in her Condition of the State address, and it has since been the subject of legislative committee hearings.

According to the Des Moines Register, Iowa and Kentucky are currently the only two U.S. states where a felon is permanently disenfranchised, minus an action taken by the governor or president.

One question for Iowa lawmakers is whether to make the restoration of voting rights contingent on individuals repaying all court-ordered restitution.

In its 50-state list of laws that govern the right of people with criminal convictions to vote, the Brennan Center for Justice places the other 10 Midwestern states into one of two categories.

- Voting rights restored upon completion of sentence, including prison, parole and probation — Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska (with a two-year waiting period after completion of sentence), South Dakota and Wisconsin.
- Voting rights restored automatically after release from prison — Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, North Dakota and Ohio.

By:
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