FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

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**Voter Registration Drive at the Onondaga County Justice Center**

A voter registration drive for inmates at the Onondaga County Justice Center will be conducted by Onondaga Votes!, a non-partisan coalition of volunteers, on September 19, 20, 24, and October 8, 2018. Each day two volunteers accompanied by a representative of the Onondaga County Human Rights Commission will offer voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications to inmates eligible to vote in New York State. Voters who register by the October 12 deadline will be eligible to vote in the November 6, 2018 General Election.

Many inmates housed in the county jail are eligible to vote under New York State Election Law. Often, inmates have not been convicted of a crime, and are awaiting trial. Being charged with a crime does not take away voting rights in New York. Being convicted of a misdemeanor or violation does not affect voting rights. A person convicted of a felony is ineligible to vote while serving a jail sentence for the felony conviction and on parole. People on probation can vote. People convicted of a felony can re-register to vote after completion of any prison sentence and any post-release parole or supervision. Note that people on parole for a felony may receive a voting restoration pardon from the Governor that allows them to vote while still on parole.

The voting restoration pardon covers any election held in NY State for any issue or office, whether local, state, or federal. A parolee does not need to apply for a voting restoration pardon. The Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) will send a list of individuals released to community supervision to the Governor’s office each month. The Governor’s Office will consider a variety of factors, including if the person is living successfully in the community without subsequent incarceration while maintaining required contact with their parole officer. Once the pardon is issued, a parolee can register to vote like anyone else by submitting a standard voter registration form to the Board of Elections in the county of residence or registering online. Local Boards of Elections are notified when a person temporarily loses the right to vote after being sentenced to prison as a result of a felony conviction. When Board of Elections staff receive a voter registration form from such a person, they will check the Parolee Lookup website ([www.doccs.ny.gov/paroleelookup/lookup.aspx](http://www.doccs.ny.gov/paroleelookup/lookup.aspx) ) to confirm if the person has received a voting restoration pardon.

Onondaga Votes! is a non-partisan coalition comprised of volunteers from a variety of organizations including the League of Women Voters, which received a grant from the Gifford Foundation to increase voter participation. The first ever voter registration drive at the Onondaga County Justice Center was organized in 2016 by the Central New York Women’s Bar Association, which is participating again in this year’s voter registration drive.

People and organizations interested in volunteering for upcoming voter registration and get out the vote events may contact the League of Women Voters of Syracuse Metropolitan Area at 315-396-8225.

For further information:

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