

by the just sentence of the law, has forfeited that very right of personal liberty, which the right to vote is intended his personal rights, (the only sacrifice ever offered to offend law,) has made full atonement for his transgression. But further, the offender has not only made atonement for his offence by his confinement and its consequences, but the punishment, in the estimation of the law, has effected another of its principal objects—*his moral reformation*—and if it has effected this object in fact, then the proposition in the first section of the bill, cannot possibly have a foundation to rest upon. Is it not calculated to have this effect in fact; can any one suppose a more effectual mode of bringing about this great end of punishment, than the penitentiary system now, being prepared under the auspices of our State; free as each of the criminals will be under this system from the companionship of his corrupt fellow prisoners, his dreary solitude will not fail to summon up such recollections as will be calculated to subdue his temper and to afford the most useful reflections on the dangers of folly and vice. These reflections, combined with the habits of industry, to be acquired by his constant employment in bodily labor, must have a strong tendency to reform him, and to render him capable of becoming an honest and useful member of society, and the right to vote which he has thus become worthy of exercising, by the feeling of independence it inspires, will complete the change which punishment had commenced. But let the proposition in this bill be adopted, let each of these unfortunate men as he approaches the *ballot-box*, be excluded with the cry “you have been a convict,” and all these good effects will be destroyed. Shame ed to protect. When, however, the term of his punishment is at an end, when his chains are unriveted, and he becomes once more entitled to all the personal rights of a freeman, the necessary protective right of voting immediately attaches, and no law can justly deprive him of it as a matter of punishment, especially when the sacrifice of one or more of will be converted into recklessness. United in a common cause, these common sufferers will not fail to form combinations and conspiracies, and to threaten danger to society and government, in proportion to their strength. The objections urged against the 1st section of the bill, are equally applicable to the 2d and remaining section, and your committee would not therefore recommend the passage of either section.

All which is respectfully submitted.

B. G. Harris, Chairman.