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Should past convicted felons have statute limitations after their time is Served?

My research topic is about the purpose of the criminal justice system, how it should hold people accountable and to rehabilitate to reentry into society. Should they still face legal restrictions and denied access after they have served their time? Or, should they considered to be free with no legal restrictions and regain all rights back? As far as gun ownership to protect themselves, voting for who they want to lead their country, employment; gaining a job that they want to pursue as a career, housing; to be able to apply to certain houses or apartments that they want to live in and being denied government help. My father is a past convicted felon, who has faced many challenges stemming from his past mistakes. There are certain things he can't do because of this conviction. He couldn't vote, he can't become a coach for any sports through a school, he can't work in a school, he can't get a government job, he doesn't have access to his second right, the right to bear arms, he can't obtain certain jobs, etc. This is a greater issue than it may seem because even after the individual has served their time, they're still being treated and, in some aspect, living like a criminal. It's like a kid, they do something as a seven -year-old on a random Thursday, therefore their parents punish them for the weekend. That's a fair punishment. Once it's Monday, should their punish continue? Same for past convicted felons, if they have served their punishment, should they still be punished for the rest of their life?

A 2003 study by Devah Page found that having a criminal record makes it much harder to get a job, even if you qualify for it. A 2010 author Michelle Alexander of *The New Jim Crow*, shares insight on how these laws affects millions of people who has served their time, targeting more of the Black and Latino communities, keeping them trapped in their past mistakes. Another A popular 2002 study by Uggen and Manza showed how former convicted felons can affect elections, mostly in states with a larger number of former felons. However, everyone doesn't agree. Some has beliefs that these restrictions are in place to protect our society, mostly for the violent or serious committed crimes.

Ethically, continuing to label someone as a criminal after they've served their time creates a permanent punishment. Life is about learning as well as making mistakes. If someone has finished their sentence and have truly changed or made necessary changes to their lives, they should be able to move on with their life. This speaks to our sense of justice (ethos), helping to reduce repeated crimes by helping our people change their lives (logos), and the emotional pain these individual face by waiting to be free but are still considered and treated like criminals (pathos). A question that I'm sure past convicted felons ask themselves is "how can I truly start over of the system won't let us?". Their life after prison does matter! They deserve a second chance after jail!

This topic is more so important to me because I know the hardships that he faced dealing with those challenges, and this is also a topic that doesn't get talked about as much as it should be. Real life stories, like my fathers, illustrate that this isn't just a legal issue- it's a human one. When rights are denied from former felons, we aren't just punishing them, we're limiting futures, weakening communities and harming the families.

Works Cited

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. The New Press, 2010.

Pager, Devah. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 108, no. 5, 2003, pp. 937–975.

Uggen, Christopher, and Jeff Manza. "Democratic Contraction? Political Consequences of Felon Disenfranchisement in the United States." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 67, no. 6, 2002, pp. 777–803.