Written by Newwire Wednesday, 05 June 2013 12:29

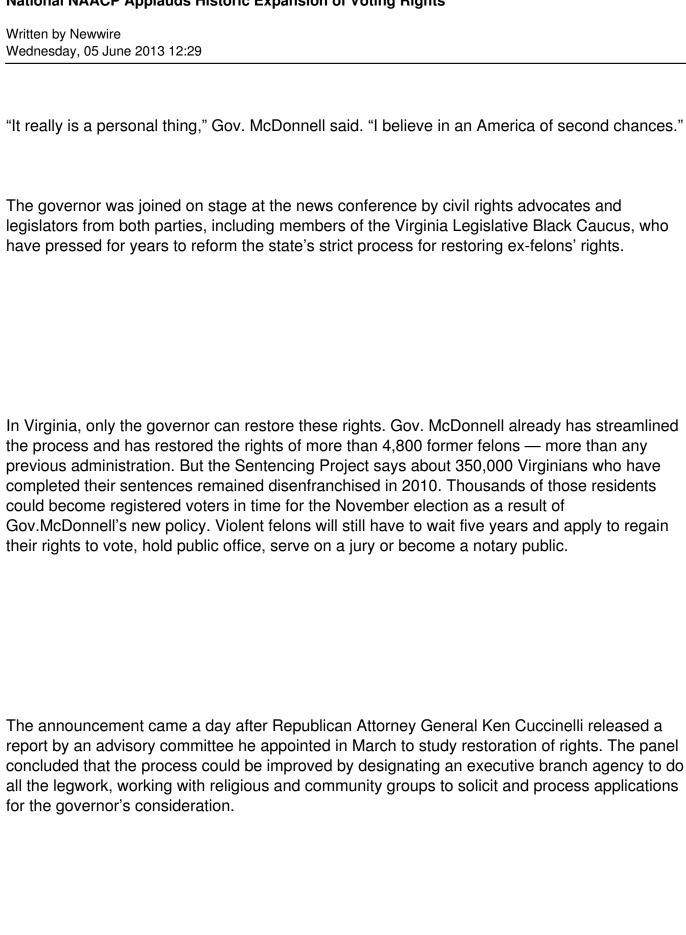
Untitled document



"This is a great step for Virginia and we look forward to working with the Commonwealth ...on expanding the vote,"stated Benjamin Todd Jealous, national president and CEO of the NAACP. "Anyone who has made a mistake, done their time and paid their debt to society should be able to join their neighbors at the voting booth."

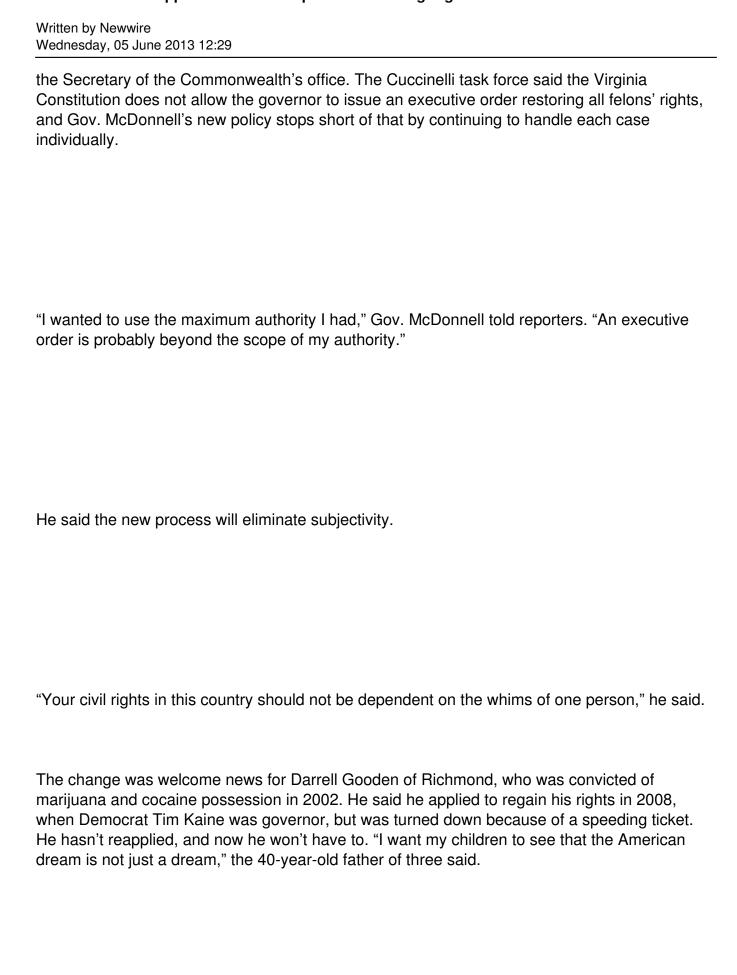
The head of the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization issued the statement in response to Republican Gov. Bob McDonnell's historic and unprecedented plan to streamline the voter rights restoration process for people with nonviolent felony convictions. In a news conference at Cedar Street Baptist Church of God in Richmond's mostly black Church Hill community, the governor said nonviolent felons who finish serving their sentences and maintain, after that, a clean record will regain their right to vote and other civil rights on an individual basis without having to apply.

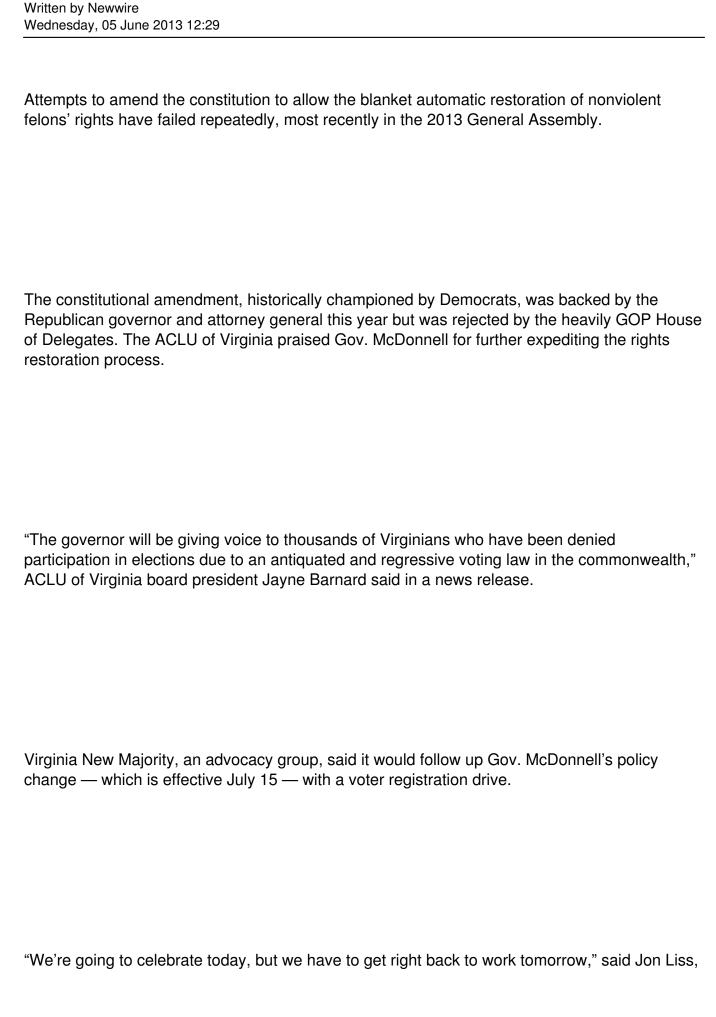
The governor also is eliminating a two-year waiting period for former felons convicted of nonviolent crimes to have their civil rights restored. Previously, they also had to apply. Cases will now be automatically considered without an application.

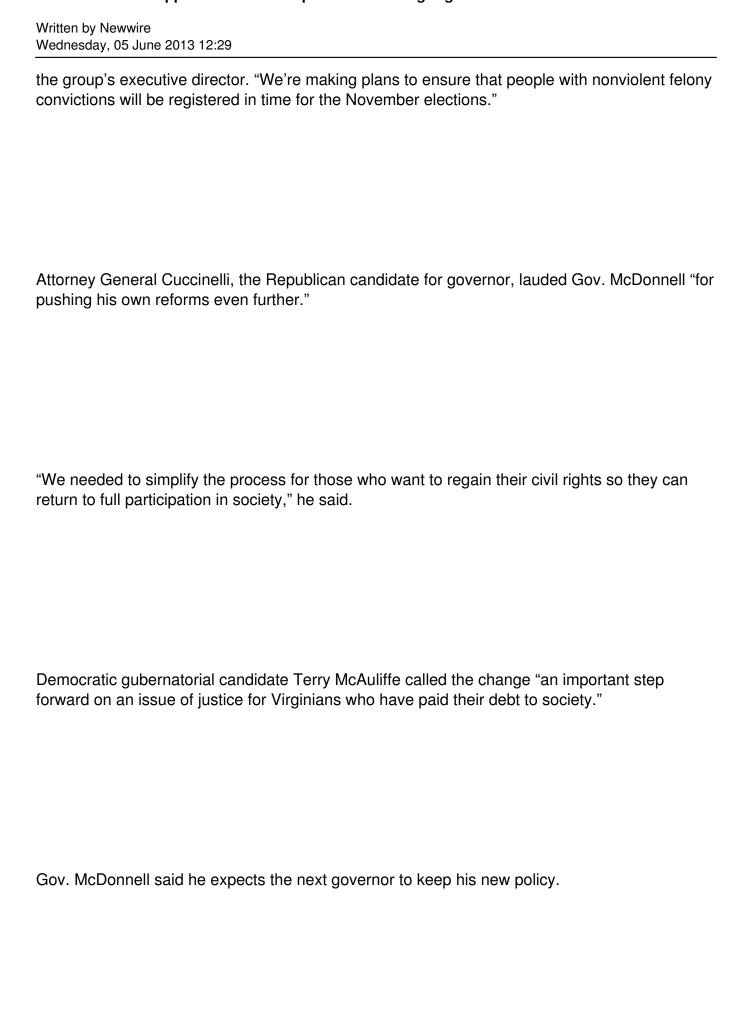


The attorney general said he liked the idea of outside help but preferred to keep the program in

2/6







Written by Newwire Wednesday, 05 June 2013 12:29

The Associated Press contributed to this story.