**Betty Riddle**: Okay, well, I was adjudicated as an adult at 17. My first experience, in '89, in prison, I was told I would never vote again in life. It was a life sentence that they imposed on us. And I went through life just accepting it, that I'd never vote. And then, I got involved in, while I was in prison, into a legal class, where I was helping people while in prison. So when I got through with prison, I came home. I became a chef. And then, after a couple of years, I went to college and got my social degree as a paralegal. So I started working for Larry Eger at the Public Defender office. And one particular day, I was sitting in the break room having lunch, and a lady by Susan Nala works with the ACLU, came in. And she was talking to me about voter registration and told me that she had been fighting for 10 years to get it passed.

(00:59) And I shared my story with her, and she wanted to know could I speak. I start speaking. And then, after they passed it, it was like a joy that I can't explain, after 44 years, never voted. And then, we celebrated, my job celebrated, we had so much fun. Then six months later, they came back with, we can vote, but we had to pay court costs and fines. So at this particular time, I was speaking through the ACLU, and I got a phone call from a lady attorney from New York. And she understood that my struggle and what I was fighting for. I was on ABC, NBC News, and she asked could she represent me on the voter's right. And I said "yes." So I continued speaking, because I'm the voice for every former felon, that has the right. So I start speaking for all former felons and then, we got involved in it. And I start traveling in different places speaking, the Capital, South Carolina, everywhere.

(02:09) Then upon that, we decided we was still fighting back to get it. So finally, we got in court. We made it all the way to federal court, and I pretty much addressed my issues with him. Because one of the problems that a lot of us felons was running into is that they wanted us to pay court costs that has fell off, didn't exist no more. My case go all the way back to 1975, when I was adjudicated as an adult. They went back to 1990. So I couldn't pay, because it didn't exist. So the whole issue was that a lot of us couldn't afford to pay. We just can't afford to pay court costs and fines. I had to go back like 44 years.

(02:59) And then, it became an issue. So all us, it was 17 of us, came to court and we testified in federal court about our means and our financial obligations and how we can't afford or how we can't find half of them. And we addressed it to the federal court. And then, we was waiting maybe the end of the month to hear from him. The next week, we heard from him, and he granted us our motions for all 17 of us to vote. Now, we are fighting for everybody to vote. So right now, we have an appealing process, that's going to take place on November the 28th. And that's how I got involved. It was like a gift. It was like a life sentence was lifted off of me, because all those felons knew we could never vote in life. We knew our voices would never be heard and never made a difference.

(03:51) So that was my whole fight, to make sure that our voice... Because we got out, we live a productive life, I work, I pay taxes, I own a home, I own a car, I have all that. I live a productive life. So why are we still being penalized for a law that already passed that gave us a right to vote? I did not understand that. And throughout all my interviews, I really came to terms that I really don't think it's about court costs and fines. Because if that's what the case, why only us have to pay? Why don't everybody pay? Why you single us out? Because we don't have a life sentence no more. So after I realized that, and after court, I realized that it's not even about court costs and fines. It's about stopping us from voting, because they knew they wasn't going to win. You can't stop nobody from voting on their financial needs.

(04:42) Some of us just can't. We live paycheck to paycheck. So that was my biggest joy of life, when the judge handed down that the 17 clients that sued can vote 2020 election. So right now, my whole primary purpose now is to make sure and fight for everybody else, so everybody can vote in their 2020 election. So I'm pretty much going with the appeal, hoping that something comes out with the appeal, so we can vote. It felt like freedom. It's like, when you get a lifetime sentence on something and then, they take it away, it's like freedom. And it's like, "Oh my God, my voice can be heard now. I can make a difference in the community. I can choose who our next president is." And that joy was something that I never had, because like I said, I never even entertained the thought of voting. Because I knew it was a lifetime sentence. So when that happened, me and my kids celebrated. I showed my card on Facebook. It was just joy of relief, that now I can be a part of, instead of apart from.