

## Desmond Meade

Desmond Meade is a formerly homeless returning citizen who overcame many obstacles to eventually become the President of the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRRC), Chair of Floridians for a Fair Democracy, a graduate of Miami Dade College, Florida International University College of Law, a Ford Global Fellow, and a 2021 MacArthur “Genius” Fellow.

Recognized by Time Magazine as one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World in 2019, Meade presently leads efforts to empower and civically re-engage local communities across the state, and to reshape local, state, and national criminal justice policies. His work has resulted in being named Floridian and Central Floridian of the Year 2019.

As President and Executive Director of FRRRC, which is recognized for its work on voting and criminal justice reform issues, Meade led the FRRRC to a historic victory in 2018 with the successful passage of Amendment 4, a grassroots citizen’s initiative which restored voting rights to over 1.4 million Floridians with past felony convictions. Amendment 4 represented the single largest expansion of voting rights in the United States in half a century and brought an end to 150 years of a Jim Crow-era law in Florida.

A sought-after speaker, Meade has made numerous appearances on radio and television, and has spoken before national organizations such as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Bread for the World. Meade has testified before Congressional members and staffers and was a part of a delegation to the United Nations where he gave testimony regarding disenfranchisement in Florida. Meade orchestrated a historic meeting at the White House between returning citizens and President Obama’s administration. Most recently, Meade served as a Commissioner on the National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice which was co-chaired by former U.S. Attorney Generals Loretta Lynch and Alberto Gonzalez.

He is also a member of the Council on Criminal Justice. He has appeared on numerous shows such as Al-Jazeera, Democracy NOW, MSNBC with Joy Ann Reid, FOX News with Dana Perino and Tucker Carlson, Samantha Bee, and All In with Chris Hayes. He is a guest columnist for the Huffington Post in which one of his articles about the death of Trayvon Martin garnered national attention.

Meade has been featured in several newspaper and magazine articles and was chosen as a “Game Changer” by Politic 365, as well as being recognized as a “Foot Soldier” on the Melissa Harris-Perry Show on MSNBC. Meade is married and has five beautiful children.

