



## **Protecting Against the Onslaught of Voter Suppression Efforts in the States: A Statement from the Voting Rights Working Group**

As a nation, we have a shared commitment and responsibility to protect the voices and the rights of American voters. Our systems of democracy are made stronger when we all are respected and heard. A representative and effective government starts with free and fair access to the vote. Most of us understand these underlying principles and enthusiastically support and defend our hard-won voting freedoms.

Unfortunately, a small—but motivated—group of politicians are putting their own political priorities and agendas before the well-being of our nation and our people. Right now, across the country, we are seeing a rash of state legislative actions that aim to suppress and silence certain voters. The bills vary across the country. Specific actions are tailored to precisely target certain populations. In some places, they will make it harder for urban and rural voters of color to drop off ballots. Elsewhere, they increase travel distances and reduce office hours for Native voters on remote reservations to register or cast their ballots. We see proposals for reduced hours and reduced polling locations, as well as out-sized restrictions and penalties. However, despite the differences in detail, we see a consistent, underlying pattern of racism and inequity in these bills, with a silencing effect that is consistent – impacting the very communities that have had to fight the hardest for access to the ballot.

Each of the organizations in the Voting Rights Working Group has a history and tradition of working to make American democracy as strong and inclusive as possible – fighting legislation and voting practices that seek to disenfranchise and silence voices based on race, ethnicity, Native American affiliation, class, or community. Because of these experiences, we are well-familiar with voter suppression like that which we see in these bills. Unequal access to US political systems is nothing new. We are firmly and absolutely committed to making elections equally accessible to all voters regardless of their ethnicity, race, or income. All voices count in our American democracy.

We will remain vigilant in the face of this onslaught against voters’ rights. Our American ideals cannot allow laws that limit certain voters’ access to the political process. As a nation, we must reject those who would weaken our democracy and restrict our essential freedom to vote and be heard. Denying people the vote, silencing people of color, is a sad and disgraceful part of our history. It must not be our future.

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The Voting Rights Working Group is a loose consortium of the nation’s most prominent and experienced nonprofit organizations pursuing voting rights litigation on behalf of racial minorities. Our member organizations are nonpartisan legal advocacy groups with decades of experience in using the law to promote and protect the voting rights of people of color. Our member organizations include:

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| American Civil Liberties Union                  | LatinoJustice PRLDEF   |
| Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund | Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law                |
| Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC        | MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund) |
| Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles | NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund                     |
| Brennan Center for Justice                      | Native American Rights Fund                                  |
| Demos   | Southern Coalition for Social Justice                        |