



April 2026

Louisiana State Legislature
900 N 3rd Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Re: Pass the Louisiana State Voting Rights Act

To the Louisiana State Legislature:

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, call for the immediate passage of the Louisiana Voting Rights Act, Senate Bill 365 ("S.B. 365") filed by Senator Royce Duplessis. At a time when the principles of fair representation are being dismantled at every level of government, Louisiana must act now to protect the freedom to vote and to defend democracy.

More than sixty years ago, the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 ("VRA"), fundamentally reshaped American democracy. By dismantling many systemic barriers to Black political participation and representation, the federal VRA's impact was immediate and transformative. Before the VRA, only slightly more than 30% of voting

age people of color in Louisiana were registered to vote; and within two years of the VRA's passage, registration rates jumped to nearly 60% for this population.^[1]

For decades, the VRA's core protections were considered settled and essential. Congress reauthorized the VRA five times, as recently as 2006, with overwhelming bipartisan support, reaffirming a shared commitment to fair and equal access to the ballot.^[2] Yet despite the VRA's historic popularity and success, key provisions have been chipped away in the decades since its passage, increasing the urgency to protect its remaining provisions and advance state-level voting protections.

The Supreme Court's 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* gutted critical, proactive VRA protections that prevented discriminatory voting policies and unfair maps from taking effect in places with the worst records of voter suppression, including communities across Louisiana.^[3] Over a decade after *Shelby*, it was litigation under the remaining antidiscrimination protections of the VRA that compelled Louisiana to finally adopt a fair congressional map that provided new opportunities for Black voters to elect their candidates of choice after years of exclusion.^[4] But that progress was immediately challenged, marking a renewed effort to attack what remains of the VRA in *Louisiana v. Callais*.^[5]

In Louisiana and beyond, the promise of the VRA, and the multi-ethnic, multi-racial democracy it was designed to protect, is under sustained attack with predictable results. Political participation has been suppressed, representation distorted, and equal power denied. For example, parishes have closed polling places disproportionately in Black communities.^[6] And voter turnout in Black communities has routinely and significantly trailed behind white communities, including in the most recent presidential and gubernatorial election cycles and particularly in communities formerly covered under Section 5.^[7]

The Louisiana Legislature cannot sit by while these harms persist and our democracy is hollowed. The time is *now* to pass the Louisiana Voting Rights Act, which would provide essential tools to address threats to voting rights and fair representation in Louisiana's parishes, cities, and towns. The Louisiana Voting Rights Act would establish meaningful safeguards by:

- Stopping voter suppression and discriminatory practices before harm spreads
- Preventing unfair and racially dilutive voting maps at the parish and local levels
- Allowing communities to defend their rights in Louisiana courts without waiting years for federal action

Legislation like the Louisiana Voting Rights Act is powerful, practical, and popular. More than three-quarters of voters nationwide support a voting rights act in their state,

including broad support across political affiliation and racial lines.^[8] Why? Because the right to vote is fundamental. Representation is not a privilege. And a democracy without equal access to the ballot is a democracy in name only.

We ask each Louisiana Legislator to:

1. Co-Sponsor the Louisiana Voting Rights Act:

Lawmakers must do more than cast a vote. We are asking legislators to attach their names to this bill and publicly stand for voting rights. This is not the moment to avoid the fight or quietly sideline the issue. The Louisiana Voting Rights Act seeks only to protect the basic rights every Louisiana citizen is entitled to.

2. Vote for the Louisiana Voting Rights Act, S.B. 365:

We call on all legislators to vote for the Louisiana State Voting Rights Act to codify their support for voting rights and fair elections into state law.

For over a decade, Power Coalition and our partners have been on the frontlines defending voting rights in Louisiana. We know this legislation is necessary because we have seen firsthand how our system has degraded in recent years. This is a defining moment. We must act. Future generations will look back at these attacks on voting rights and our freedoms and will judge us on what we did—or failed to do—in this moment.

We urge the Legislature to act without delay and to unequivocally affirm that in Louisiana, every voice matters, every community counts, and the promise of equal protection will be enforced, not deferred. Pass the Louisiana Voting Rights Act now.

Sincerely,

Ashley Shelton, President/CEO

Power Coalition for Equity and Justice

7389 Florida Blvd Suites 3 & 4

Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Victoria Wenger, Manager

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

40 Rector Street, Floor 5

New York, NY 10006

Imani Brooks, Policy Counsel

Adam Lioz, Senior Policy Counsel

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

700 14th Street N.W., Suite 600

Washington, DC 20005

A Bella LaFemme Society
ACLU Louisiana
AFL-CIO
All Streets All People - ASAP
Alliance for Affordable Energy
Asian American Legal Defense and
Education Fund
Black Voters Matter Fund
Campaign Legal Center
Democracy in Action
Engaging New Voices and Voters (ENVV)
Fair Elections Center
Fair Fight
For a Better Bayou
HousingLOUISIANA
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
LCCR

JoDale Ales, Baton Rouge
Darcus Allen, Shreveport
Russell Armstrong, Washington
Darica Simon Baptiste, Baton Rouge
Rosary Beck, New Orleans
Ann Bertsch, Baton Rouge
Madhu Bhatnagar, Kenner
Taryn Branson, New Orleans
Vicki Brooks, Baton Rouge
Komal Brown, New Orleans
Marianne Burns, New Orleans
Dontracy Carter, Belle Rose
Tribble Condor, New Orleans
Marie Constantin, Baton Rouge
Masiel Currier-Duarte, Baton Rouge
Elka Cuttino, New Orleans

LWVLA
Mama+
NAACP Louisiana
NCJW
New Orleans Maternal Child Health
Coalition
New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial
Justice
PJI
SPLC
State Voices
Step Up
The Amandla Group
Urban League of Louisiana
VOTE
Women With a Vision

Lontravia Morris, Shreveport
Mary Anne Mushatt, New Orleans
Angela Myles, Shreveport
Devon Norman, Lafayette
Crystal Odoms, New Orleans
Jennifer Pack, Renton
Benji Palus, New Orleans
Cynthia Perry, Alexandria
Gail Pesses, Metairie
Gregory Phillips, New Orleans
Justina Plowden, Abbeville
Samantha Pourciau, New Orleans
Karista Reed, Gonzales
Linda Reine, New Orleans
Emily Rhodes, New Orleans
Cherry Riggs, Baton Rouge

Karen DOr, New Orleans
Keisha Daisy, Prairieville
Berneta Daniels, Keithville
Vicki Dauterive, Baton Rouge
Zoe David-Lang, New Orleans
Kenneth Davis, Bossier City
June Johnson Davis, Alexandria
Melody Davis, New Orleans
Ina Davis, New Orleans
Imani Deas, Baton Rouge
Brenda Dickson, Dallas
Aimée Dominique, Lafayette
Felicia Douglas, Minden
Kimberly Evans, Prairieville
Wayne Everard, New Orleans
Jadyn Fleming, New Orleans
Samantha Fleurinor, New Orleans
Patricia Francis, Moss Point
Marion Freistadt, New Orleans
Consuela M Gaines, Lafayette
Cherie Garrett, Baker
Terrill Germany, Baton Rouge
Cathy Gray, Baton Rouge
Stacey Guidry, New Orleans
Julie Schwam Harris, New Orleans
Farity Henry, New Orleans
Honorelle Henry, New Orleans
Kierra Hickerson, Baton Rouge
Gerri J Hobdy, Baton Rouge
Anne Hollier, Lafayette
Yasmonique Hookfin, Violet
Yasmonique Hookfin, Violet
Venita Horton, Shreveport
Calvin Horton, Shreveport
Bianchi Hughes, New Orleans
Ivy Jack, Baton Rouge

Asti Robins, Baton Rouge
Press Robinson, Baton Rouge
Ruth Roddy, Baton Rouge
Rachel Rowling, La Place
Lisa Rustemeyer, Mandeville
Mark Sands, Metairie
Nadine Saunders, Baton Rouge
Abria Scott, Baton Rouge
JAHmilah Sekhmet, Lafayette
Sondra Shannon, New Orleans
Marcia Shannon, Baton Rouge
Morgan Shannon, New Orleans
Dakota Shelton, New Orleans
Marla Silverberg, Baton Rouge
Vilinda Simmons, Baton Rouge
Hamilton Simons-Jones, New Orleans
Yolanda Martin Singleton, Gonzales
Rose Singleton, Shreveport
Betty Smith, Natchitoches
Laketa M. Smith, Baton Rouge
JE Smith, Baton Rouge
Kendra Smith-Parks, New Orleans
Carolyn Mather, Prairieville
BL Meyer, Lafayette
Khalil Miller, New Orleans
Marilyn Mitchell, Abbeville
Edwin Soule, Hammond
Pamela Steeg, New Orleans
Jessica Stone, Slidell
Paula Taylor, Mandeville
Lacrecia Terrance, Baton Rouge
Cliff Thomas, Monroe
Gwen Thomas, Baton Rouge
Grant Tregre, New Orleans
Shelly Tyler, Marrero
Angee Valentine, Saint Gabriel

Daneeta Jackson, New Orleans
Christina James, New Orleans
Barbara Kaplinsky, New Orleans
Mary Karam, Baton Rouge
Max Krochmal, New Orleans
Kimberly LaMotte, Baton Rouge
Chad Landry, Lafayette
Jennifer Landry, Lafayette
Monica Lawal, New Orleans
Linda Leboeuf, New Orleans
Gail Leboeuf, Convent
Adele London, New Orleans
Ahmaad Lott, New Orleans
Micaiah Lugo, Gretna
Nanette McCann, Plaquemine
Max Martin, Baton Rouge

Erica Vinson, Shreveport
Connie Warfield, Monroe
Shelly Warren, Gramercy
Barbara Washington, Convent
Lynnetta Whitehurst, Monroe
Adashia Wilson, Shreveport
Checo Yancy, Baton Rouge
Lynette Bech, Franklinton
Esther DeJong, New Orleans

Cc:

Louisiana Committee on Senate and Governmental Affairs

Louisiana Committee on House and Governmental Affairs

^[1] See Table 4, The Voting Rights Act: Historical Development and Policy Background, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R47520>.

^[2] See Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments of 2006, Pub. L. No. 109-246, 120 Stat. 577.

^[3] 570 U.S. 529 (2013); see Jurisdictions Previously Covered By Section 5, CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (May 17, 2023), <https://www.justice.gov/crt/jurisdictions-previously-covered-section-5>.

^[4] See *Robinson v. Landry*, LEGAL DEFENSE FUND, <https://www.naacpldf.org/case-issue/robinson-v-landry-louisiana-discriminatory-redistricting/>.

^[5] See *Louisiana v. Callais*, 606 U.S. ____ (2025); see also *Louisiana v. Callais* FAQ, LEGAL DEFENSE FUND, <https://www.naacpldf.org/case-issue/louisiana-v-callais-faq/>.

^[6] See Democracy Diverted: Polling Place Closures and the Right to Vote, THE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE EDUCATION FUND (Sept. 2019), <https://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/reports/Democracy-Diverted.pdf>.

^[7] See *Why Geaux Vote? Racial Disparities in Louisiana Voter Turnout and Opportunities for Intervention*, 4 FORDHAM L. VOTING RTS. & DEMOCRACY F. 1 (2026), <https://fordhamdemocracyproject.com/2026/01/28/why-geaux-vote-racial-disparities-in-louisiana-voter-turnout-and-opportunities-for-intervention/>; see also Kevin Morris and Coryn Grange, *Growing Racial Disparities in Turnout, 2008-2022*, BRENNAN CENTER (Mar. 2, 2024), at Figure 10 White-Black Turnout Gap Time Series, <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/growing-racial-disparities-voter-turnout-2008-2022>.

^[8] Mem. from LDF & Impact Rsch. to Interested Parties (Jan. 16, 2025), <https://www.naacpldf.org/wp-content/uploads/2025-01-16-Key-Findings-Memo4.pdf>