



Florida Needs Its Own Voting Rights Act

Florida has a long history and ongoing record of racial discrimination in voting and other areas. Over the past decade, the state has enacted several anti-voter laws, undermining a fair and transparent democracy.¹

Anti-voter laws contribute to racial disparities in voter registration, language accessibility, outright voter intimidation and decreased turnout. These laws create barriers throughout the voting process, including restrictions on drop boxes and vote-by-mail, a ban on ranked-choice voting, limitations on election funding, and harsh financial and criminal penalties on organizations conducting community voter registration. Returning citizens, whose voting rights were restored by Amendment 4 in 2018, must now ensure all financial obligations specified in their sentencing documents are paid before registering to vote.

To address the proliferation of anti-voter laws in Florida and their impacts on black and brown communities This year, state Sen. Geraldine Thompson, (D-Orlando), and Rep. LaVon Bracy Davis, (D-Orlando), introduced the Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore Voting Rights Act of Florida (FL VRA). This legislation is only the second state Voting Rights Act in the South. The FL VRA aims to strengthen democracy for everyone in Florida by removing numerous barriers to voting that disproportionately affect voters of color and have historically burdened voting rights in the state. The bill sponsors have already indicated they will re-file this legislation for the 2025 Florida legislative session.

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The FLVRA Will Protect Voters of Color and Strengthen Florida's Democracy

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Florida can and should lead in protecting the right to vote and promoting an inclusive democracy.² If enacted, the FL VRA will strengthen democracy in Florida with several key provisions:

Federal Recommendations

As ground zero for the historic and contemporary voting rights struggles, the voices and experiences of Floridians are critical to the push to protect the right to vote nationally.

- Congress should advance federal legislation that restores and modernizes the Voting Rights Act of 1965, sets national minimum standards for election administration, and increases federal funding for state and local election administration. Specifically, we urge members of Congress to support the swift passage of the John R Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, the Freedom to Vote Act, and significant funding increases for election administration in the FY25 federal budget and beyond.

¹ Brower, M. (2023, May 24). *Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis' Record on Voting Rights*. Democracy Docket. democracy-docket.com/analysis/florida-gov-ron-desantis-record-on-voting-rights/

² The Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore Voting Rights Act of Florida coalition was led by SPLC Action Fund, LDF, Equal Ground, All Voting is Local, the ACLU of Florida, and Florida Rising.

- Address vote suppression and dilution that diminish the voices of Black and Brown voters.
- Introduce a preclearance program managed by a new independent Florida Voting Rights Act Commission.
- Expand language assistance for voters with limited English proficiency to ensure effective and authentic participation for all.
- Create a central public repository for election and demographic data to promote transparent, evidence-based election administration practices.
- Provide new tools to combat voter intimidation, deception and obstruction, empowering voters to protect their rights.
- Establish a paid holiday for Election Day, same-day voter registration and automatic voter registration through the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.
- Protect returning citizens from unfair prosecutions by developing a centralized database to determine voter eligibility.

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