



Strengthening the Voting Rights Act: What is at Stake and How You Can Help

On June 25, 2013, the Supreme Court struck down a key provision of the Voting Rights Act (VRA), one of the most powerful tools available to combat election and voting practices which discriminate against Latinos and other underrepresented groups. This provision required jurisdictions with a history of discrimination to undergo a federal review of proposed voting changes (known as “preclearance”) before enacting them. It had been used to block over 1,000 discriminatory voting policies, but the Supreme Court effectively suspended its enforcement unless and until Congress enacts legislation to modernize the VRA. This has important implications for the Latino electorate:

- **Large numbers of Latino voters are personally affected by the weakening of the VRA.** Nearly 8 million eligible Latino voters live in areas that used to be subject to VRA-mandated oversight and no longer are - that represents more than 1 of every 4 potential Latino voters (voting-age citizens) in the country.
- **Without the VRA, states enact policies that keep underrepresented communities from the polls.** For example, the state of Texas announced it would implement its strict voter identification (ID) law the same day the Supreme Court announced its decision on the VRA. This photo ID law had previously been blocked by the VRA because it discriminated against Latinos and other underrepresented groups.
- **Equal protection of voting rights leads to advances in equality throughout our communities.** Latino representation on school boards is positively associated with improved conditions and opportunities for Latino students. Additionally, Latino, African-American, Asian-American and Native American elected officials at all levels of office tend to advance policies that improve economic opportunities, health, and quality of life for members of underrepresented communities in their jurisdictions.

IF YOU OR YOUR CONSTITUENTS ENCOUNTER ELECTION PROBLEMS, SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES!

Our 1-888-Ve-Y-Vota (888-839-8682) hotline is staffed exclusively by bilingual operators.

The NALEO Educational Fund is closely monitoring bipartisan legislation in the House and the Senate to help strengthen the VRA. **In order for us to educate Members of Congress about the urgency of modernizing the VRA, we ask that you share your experiences with us regarding problems with elections or voting that you encounter - and encourage your constituents and colleagues to do the same. Some examples of pertinent problems include:**

- No Spanish-speaking workers or Spanish-language ballots, signage or materials at a polling place;
- Poll workers stop voters from bringing family members or friends into polling booths to provide assistance;
- Voters are questioned individually about their U.S. citizenship at a polling place;
- Poll workers or election officials make derogatory comments about particular voters;
- People who believe they have registered to vote are not found on the poll books and/or not offered the opportunity to vote using a provisional ballot;
- There are long lines of voters waiting at a polling place;
- Poll workers demand proof of identification in a state with no voter ID requirement;
- Dates, times, and places for registering or voting are changed shortly before an election is scheduled;
- An election is canceled, or an elected position is converted into a position whose holder is appointed;
- Changes are made to convert district-based elections to at-large elections, or to change individual seats elected on a district basis to at-large seats;
- Voters receive incorrect information about registration and voting procedures;
- Polling place locations are significantly changed or reduced in number.

If you, your colleagues or your constituents encounter incidents such as the ones listed above, please contact our *Ve-Y-Vota* hotline at **1 (888) 839-8682.**