



Talking Points

Voting Rights Advancement Act

The National Council of Jewish Women's (NCJW) Message

Our vote is our voice. Throughout its history, NCJW has educated and engaged our members and supporters to drive voter turnout and expand voting rights, including advocating for women's suffrage and the historic Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA), in pursuit of the Jewish value of *tzedeck*, or justice. Today, we work for election laws, policies, and practices that ensure easy and equitable access and eliminate obstacles to the electoral process so that every vote counts and can be verified. Efforts across the country to suppress the vote have multiplied since the 2013 US Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* gutted a key provision of the VRA. **To restore the strength of the VRA and protect against voter suppression, lawmakers must pass The Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA, HR 4/S 561).**

- **The VRAA would restore the Voting Rights Act to its former strength.** The 2013 *Shelby* decision effectively ended the federal government's ability, granted by the VRA, to vet changes to state and local election laws before they went into effect (a process known as preclearance). In his decision, Chief Justice Roberts urged Congress to update the formula that determines which jurisdictions need to participate in preclearance. The VRAA does exactly that by requiring states with 15 or more voting rights violations in the past 25 years to preclear changes with the Department of Justice (DOJ).
- **Voter suppression most harms already marginalized communities.** Laws and actions designed to make it harder to vote — including strict voter ID requirements, limits to early voting, and voter roll purges — disproportionately impact communities of color, minority-language speakers, low-income voters, elderly and young voters, women, and transgender individuals. For example, women are more likely than men to undergo changes to their legal name through marriage or divorce, which puts them at risk for disenfranchisement in states with strict voter ID laws.
- **The VRAA responds to the modern-day challenges of voter suppression.** Since the Supreme Court struck down the VRA's preclearance formula, dozens of laws have passed across the country making it easier to suppress the vote. In addition to preventing the implementation of restrictive laws, the VRAA would promote transparency by requiring all jurisdictions to provide public notice of election changes. It would also strengthen voting rights protections for Native American and Alaskan Native voters by offering greater access to voter registration and voting on and off Indian reservations, and ensuring that election materials are translated into all written Native languages.