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633 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Washington, DC 20004 • ncnw.org • ncnwhq@ncnw.org

February 29, 2024

Office of Senator Charles Schumer
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act

Greetings to the Leaders and Members of the United States Senate:

We are writing to you to express support from the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) and our Affiliates and Partners listed below for the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. As an organization committed to advancing civil rights, social justice, and civic engagement, we remain staunch supporters of voting rights for all Americans and implore Congress to pass this Act. We believe that this Act is key to protecting voting rights, as many attacks, suppression and the dismantling of voting rights, continue nationwide.

The impact and legacy of John Lewis's commitment to civil rights and social justice carry on through this bill. The protections to voting ensure that our democracy remains as such. As well as, ensuring that all Americans continue to have the right to choose their leaders and to be properly represented.

The history of voting rights and voter suppression is well documented in our history. John Lewis's activism during the Civil Rights Movement led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Since then there have been many attempts to dismantle and undermine the Voting Rights Act and through actions of the Supreme Court in the Shelby County decision in 2013, the door swung wide open and what has remained is the continued flood of rights being demolished that our ancestors fought and died for. Through the dismantling of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, voters have experienced discriminatory practices that have made it more difficult for voters to exercise their rights.

Everything from polling place closures to voter ID laws enactment have increased voter suppression and the ability to protect the 15th Amendment right that no citizen be denied the right to vote based on race. Furthermore, in the 8th Circuit the NAACP sued due to the Arkansas state map diminishing the power of Black voters. However, the court determined that only the U.S Attorney General, not the citizens or organizations that represent the citizens, could even bring these cases to the court. Essentially stating that there is no private right to action and that people, as well as civil rights groups, cannot defend their rights in court.

The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act not only ensures that voting is protected but serves to ensure that the demographics of voters are fairly and accurately represented. With the dismantling of democracy and polarization on the rise, we need the protections in the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act now more than ever. We call on the House of Representatives to again introduce and pass meaningful legislation that will support the right to vote freely without suppression or the interference of intimidation. And, we implore the U.S. Senate to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

Founder: Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune
Chair Emeritus: Dr. Dorothy Irene Height

President & CEO: Rev. Shavon L. Arline-Bradley

National Chair: Dr. A. Lois Keith

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Sincerely,

Shavon Arline-Bradley, President & CEO, NCNW

Randi Weingarten, President
AFT

Danette Anthony Reed, International President & CEO
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Melanie Campbell, Convener & President
Black Women's Roundtable

Elise Cooke-Holmes, International President & Chair of the Board
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Rhonda Briggins, President & CEO
Delta for Women in Action

Sonda Bradfield, National President
Eta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

Lenor Reese, National President
Gamma Phi Delta Sorority, Inc.

Kornisha McGill Brown, National President
Jack & Jill of America, Inc.

Most Esteemed Micaela Leblanc, Supreme Lady
Ladies Auxiliary, Knights of Peter Claver

Nancy Mance, Grand Basileus
Lambda Kappa Mu Sorority, Inc.

Constance Davis, National President
Les Gemmes, Inc.

Beverly Wilkerson, International President
National Association of University Women, Inc

Terri O'Neal Ford, National President & CEO

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National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc.

Lakeila Stemmons, Executive Director
National Bar Association

Sheldon D. Fields, President
National Black Nurses Association, Inc

Virginia Harris, National President
National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc.

Rasheeda Liberty, International Grand Basileus
Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.

Lori S. Gittens, National President
Swing Phi Swing Social Fellowship, Inc.

Maria Bright, President
The Auxiliary of the National Medical Association, Inc.

Gwainevere Hess, President
The Black Women's Agenda, Inc.

Lillette Green Campbell, National President Prelate
The Continental Societies

Bishop Leah Daughtry, National Presiding
The House of the Lord Churches, Inc.

Ethel Isaacs Williams, National President
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Eddie Lee Marsh, President & CEO
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Deborah King, International President
Women's Missionary Society, African Methodist Episcopal Church

Sandra B. Crowder, International President
Women's Home & Overseas Missionary Society, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

Dr. Stacie NC Grant, International President & CEO
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

Founder: Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune
Chair Emeritus: Dr. Dorothy Irene Height

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