LDF Urges Texas Secretary of State to Protect Voting Rights of Hurricane Harvey Victims

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) sent a response to the Texas Secretary of State Rolando Pablos as follow-up to our October 12th letter urging him to prevent the disenfranchisement of eligible Texas voters who, due to Hurricane Harvey, lack the transportation and resources necessary to vote in the upcoming election. The Texas Secretary of State’s office has indicated that voters in Texas who do not have the necessary identification in the aftermath of Harvey would be allowed to vote if they travel to the Voter Registrar’s office within six days and sign an affidavit. LDF applauds Texas for taking action at this critical time, but this two-step process is cumbersome and will ultimately deny victims of natural disasters their right to vote. It is unrealistic and unreasonable to expect displaced victims of the hurricane to travel to vote on or before Election Day and then have to return to the Registrar’s office in order to complete an affidavit. Instead, LDF asks Texas to take key steps to ensure that voters are allowed to complete the affidavit at their polling location.

LDF also asked the Texas Secretary of State’s office to widely publicize the fact that the Natural Disaster Provision applies to the election on November 7th. Notably, there was no clear guidance from the Texas Secretary of State’s office that the Provision applies to the upcoming election despite our request that this clarification be advertised in advance of early voting, which has already begun. It is imperative that poll workers and other officials be trained about this information so that no voter is denied their right to participate in the political process. LDF renewed our request that Texas enhance its efforts to ensure that citizens are aware of their voting rights through mailings, radio announcements, PSAs, and literature at polling locations and disaster relief sites.

Click here to read our full response.
Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.