



**For Immediate Release**  
**Monday, May 22, 2017**

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## **NAACP Legal Defense Fund Urges Alabama Governor to Sign Bill Enfranchising Thousands**

Last week, the Alabama State Legislature passed the Definition of Moral Turpitude Act, a bill that would restore the right to vote to thousands of citizens, including many people who have fully served their sentences. Currently, Alabama law does not define which felonies involve ‘moral turpitude,’ resulting in the automatic disqualification of individuals from voting. The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) has challenged Alabama’s unconstitutional and vague definition of moral turpitude for decades, and we strongly believe that this bill is a significant step in the right direction.

“For too long, Alabama law has left the voting rights of thousands of its citizens subject to arbitrary interpretation by state officials and registrars, a state of affairs that disproportionately disfranchises African Americans by depriving them of the fundamental right to vote,” said LDF President and Director-Counsel [Sherrilyn Ifill](#). “While not a panacea, this bill goes a long way towards restoring the voting rights of people with felony convictions and addressing the racial inequities that continue to plague Alabama’s criminal justice system. We urge Governor Ivey to do the right thing and sign this bill into law immediately.”

In 1985, LDF filed an [amicus brief](#) in the landmark case of [Hunter v. Underwood](#), where the U.S. Supreme Court found that the racist 1901 Alabama Constitutional Convention had purposely defined crimes of ‘moral turpitude’ to disproportionately disfranchise African Americans. Since that time, LDF has continued to advocate for an end to Alabama’s troubling practice of felon disfranchisement. In 2005, LDF filed *Gooden v. Worley* (later renamed *Chapman v. Gooden*) to compel Alabama to define ‘moral turpitude’ and apply a uniform standard for registering all eligible voters with felony convictions. The State Supreme Court ultimately dismissed the case, but validated LDF’s concerns that the ‘moral turpitude’ clause had been applied arbitrarily to the plaintiffs. In 2008, LDF filed litigation that resulted in the Alabama Department of Corrections taking steps to affirmatively encourage the registration of eligible voters who are held in state prisons.

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*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.*