NAACP Legal Defense Fund Returns to Texas Federal Court to Show Strictest Photo ID Law in the Country Was Enacted with the Intent to Discriminate Against Minorities

Today, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund (LDF) and co-counsel Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale appeared in a federal district court in Corpus Christi, TX to continue its nearly six-year fight against Texas’ suppressive law (SB14), the strictest voter ID law in the country. In Veasey v. Abbott, LDF Associate Director-Counsel Janai Nelson, who also argued the case before the Fifth Circuit in July, powerfully maintained that the voluminous evidence decisively shows that Texas’ voter ID law was enacted with the deliberate intent to prevent or unreasonably burden the ability of Black and Latino voters to participate equally in Texas’s elections.

“The facts clearly show that Texas aimed to suppress minority votes, harming hundreds of thousands of Black and Latino voters,” stated Nelson. “This was both avoidable and unjustifiable. The Legislature intentionally designed this law to disenfranchise the emerging Black and Latino majority in Texas.”

Plaintiffs return to the federal trial court after a supermajority of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the trial court’s determination that SB14 has a discriminatory effect on hundreds of thousands of Black and Latino voters in violation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA). The Fifth Circuit’s ruling also clarified the scope of evidence the trial court must consider in determining whether SB 14 was enacted with discriminatory intent in violation of the VRA and the U.S. Constitution. “Every single piece of evidence points to the conclusion that Texas enacted this suppressive law to deny minority voters access to the ballot,” declared Nelson.

“During a time where unfounded allegations of voter fraud run rampant, we cannot let a law with such a clear intent to diminish the political power of historically marginalized groups stand. This law, which is suppressive by design, must be uprooted tree and branch.”

“Four courts and 13 federal judges agree that Texas’s voter suppression law denies voters of color equal access to the ballot,” added Deuel Ross, LDF’s Assistant Counsel. “As the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals recognized, in-person voter fraud is virtually non-existent in Texas. SB 14 thus solves no real problem, and must be struck down in its entirety.”

For more information about LDF’s challenges to Texas’s discriminatory photo ID law, click here.
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.