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LDF Continues to Challenge Alabama’s Racially Discriminatory Photo ID Law in Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. ([LDF](#)) will appear before a federal appeals court on Friday to challenge Alabama’s voter photo ID law and ask the court to send this case back to the District Court for a trial.

In January, LDF, Covington & Burling, LLP, and local counsel Mitch McGuire [filed an appeal](#) after the U.S. District Court dismissed a lawsuit brought on behalf of Greater Birmingham Ministries, the Alabama NAACP, and three individual voters challenging Alabama’s photo ID law. The District Court dismissed the lawsuit without a trial, despite evidence that the Legislature had intentionally passed the law to discriminate against and burden Black and Latino voters.

The chief sponsors of Alabama’s photo ID law openly stated that its purpose was to undermine the “[black power structure](#)” and, just months prior to the passage of the law, were recorded plotting to suppress Black voter turnout in the upcoming election. Voters of color in Alabama are about two times more likely than white voters to lack acceptable ID, are over four times more likely to have their provisional ballots rejected because of the law and are almost three times more likely to neither have a car nor live within five miles of ID-issuing offices.

“Black and Latino Alabamians face multiple hurdles to obtaining photo ID to vote,” said [Deuel Ross](#), LDF Assistant Counsel. “The testimony from our clients, elected officials, and experts clearly showed that over 118,000 people lack acceptable ID and that this law has prevented thousands of people from voting. Our clients deserve their day in court to present this evidence at trial.”

After years of opposition from Black legislators, Alabama passed a photo ID law in 2011 that went into effect in 2014. In late 2015, however, Alabama closed the [driver’s license-issuing offices](#) in nearly every majority-Black county. The offices remained partially closed for the 2016 elections until a civil rights settlement with the federal government required the offices to be fully reopened.

LDF’s [lawsuit](#), filed in December 2015, alleges that Alabama’s photo ID law discriminated against Black and Latino voters in violation of the U.S. Constitution and the Voting Rights Act.

“Alabama legislators passed this photo ID law to suppress the growing influence of Black and Latino voters,” said [Natasha Merle](#), LDF Senior Counsel. “Every eligible voter has the right to cast a ballot and make their voice heard. We demand justice for all Alabamians denied their right to vote because of this discriminatory law.”

Read the full appellate brief [here](#) and LDF’s reply brief [here](#).

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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.