



For Immediate Release
June 12, 2023

LDF Media
212-965-2200 / media@naacpldf.org

LDF Applauds Historic Enactment of Connecticut Voting Rights Act: Strongest State VRA Yet Part of a Growing Trend

Today, Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont signed into law “An Act Concerning State Voting Rights in Recognition of John R. Lewis (CTVRA)” as part of the state’s new budget. The law is a state-level voting rights act that seeks to expand voting access and strengthen protections against voting discrimination for communities of color throughout the state. The CTVRA is now the nation’s most comprehensive state-level voting rights act, setting a new standard for states across the country.

The Legal Defense Fund (LDF) has advocated for state voting rights acts in several states, including supporting the successful enactment of the [New York Voting Rights Act](#) in 2022 and the CTVRA in 2023. In response to this news, LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai S. Nelson and LDF Policy Counsel Steven Lance issued the following statements:

LDF President and Director-Counsel, Janai S. Nelson:

“Today, Connecticut became a national leader by meeting a critical local need — safeguarding the fundamental right to vote. Connecticut has passed the strongest state voting rights act in the country and set a powerful example for the nation to follow.

“While too many states are passing restrictive voting laws, and our Congress remains unwilling to address these threats, Connecticut has moved forward to ensure its citizens can access this fundamental right, building upon state voting rights act legislation in New York State, California, Washington, Oregon, and Virginia.

“When it comes to a matter as fundamental as the right to vote, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The CTVRA includes tools to prevent discrimination before voters are harmed through a state-level preclearance program modeled after the successful federal program that was undercut in the Supreme Court’s 2013 *Shelby* decision. The CTVRA also helps voters take action against voter suppression or voter intimidation — and implements a statewide database of election information to promote transparency and accountability. Its comprehensive provisions make the CTVRA the strongest state voting rights act yet, setting a new standard for other states — and Congress — to follow.

“As the late John Lewis emphasized, the right to vote is ‘almost sacred,’ a vital necessity in fostering a fair, inclusive democracy. By enacting this landmark legislation, Connecticut has become a national leader in protecting and safeguarding the right to vote. As LDF fights for Black voters’ rights in Congress, in the courts, and across the country, we urge other states and the federal government to take similar steps to protect and strengthen our nation’s democracy.

LDF Policy Counsel, Steven Lance:

“Today’s passage of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of Connecticut is a tremendous accomplishment. We congratulate Connecticut lawmakers and advocates, whose bipartisan support and collaboration shepherded this legislation to the finish line. This comprehensive act is [strongly supported](#) throughout the state by lawmakers and constituents alike, and builds upon the strongest parts of the federal Voting Rights Act as well as similar laws in other states.

“We thank and congratulate the law’s co-sponsors, Senator Mae Flexer and Representative Matt Blumenthal, as well as the leadership of the Connecticut Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, for their profound dedication in shepherding this legislation. We also thank Senate President Pro Tempore Martin Looney, Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff, Speaker of the House Matt Ritter, House Majority Leader Jason Rojas, Governor Lamont, and the entire Connecticut General Assembly for the historic passage of the CTVRA.

“Fundamentally, the CTVRA will make political participation more equal and open for all voters in the state, empowering communities who have historically faced undue barriers to the ballot box. With this important step forward, Connecticut is leading by example in defending the right to vote and ensuring a fair, inclusive democratic process.”

###

Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund](#) (LDF) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. 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 Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF 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.