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LDF Releases Report Detailing Voter Suppression in 2020 Election Season

Today, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) released its highly anticipated *Democracy Defended* report, which documents and analyzes election-related activities undertaken by LDF during the 2020 election season, provides documentation of barriers faced by Black voters in target states for LDF's Prepared to Vote (PTV) and Voting Rights Defender (VRD) projects, and offers solutions for policy makers, election administrators, and community members to ensure fair access to the vote across the nation.

“It is a mistake for people to assume that because an election produced a reliable result that it ran smoothly,” explained LDF Associate Director-Counsel Janai Nelson. “Our work during the 2020 elections revealed that failures at the state and federal levels to ensure fair, safe, and easy access to the ballot caused significant burdens for Black voters and other voters of color, as well as people living with disabilities.

“Further, this report shows how the Supreme Court’s decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* — which took away crucial protections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to safeguard against discriminatory voting legislation — has allowed burdensome policies and intimidation tactics to spread and multiply across the country. Additionally, *Democracy Defended* makes clear why relying on non-profit organizations, community organizers, and individual volunteers and voters to save our democracy is not sustainable. The burden to act rests on our elected leaders at every level, but especially Congress.

“The markers of a successful election are the ability of all voters to have unencumbered access to the ballot box and to have those votes counted. This is not the democracy we have today. Time is of the essence to stop the wave of voter suppression laws and the intimidation of voters and election officials. Until these attacks are put to an end by government officials, our democracy will continue to be in peril.”

Democracy Defended presents five key findings from the 2020 election season:

- Mail-in voting is a critical option for all communities, but especially for Black voters.
- Early voting is an essential feature of ensuring fair access to the polls, especially for Black voters.
- Election administration mismanagement disproportionately burdens voters of color.
- Our democracy continues to require an outsized proportion of non-government resources to protect the right to vote.
- Threats of violence and voter intimidation against voters of color were widespread.

The report closes by posing solutions to expand and protect voting access at the state and federal level. Most importantly, Congress must:

- Enact the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 4) to restore the preclearance provision in the Voting Rights Act.
- Review all state laws to determine which jurisdictions should be covered by preclearance, even if they have not been in the past.

On the state level, all states must:

- Enact voting laws that ensure the franchise is available to every citizen.
- Facilitate voter participation in elections by offering the widest range of options, including online and same-day registration, vote-by-mail, and early voting.
- Repeal discriminatory voting laws that adversely impact the ability of people of color to register and to vote.
- Utilize available federal funding to improve election administration procedures.

Read and download LDF's *Democracy Defended* report [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. 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. 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. Follow LDF on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).