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Voting Rights Advocates Move to Intervene in Suit to Protect 5,000 Georgia Voters at Risk of Removal from the November Election Rolls

Suit by the DeKalb County Republican Party Seeks to Force the DeKalb Board of Elections to conduct voter challenge hearings in violation of federal law

DeKalb, Georgia – Today, the Georgia State Conference of the NAACP, New Georgia Project, Georgia Coalition for the People’s Agenda, A. Philip Randolph Institute, Common Cause Georgia, and League of Women Voters of Georgia, represented by Advancement Project, Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Southern Poverty Law Center, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and Arnold & Porter filed a motion to intervene in a lawsuit that is currently pending in state court (DeKalb County Superior Court). They also filed a motion to dismiss a suit brought by the DeKalb County Republican Party and an activist that seeks to force the members of the DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections to convene challenge hearings for the purpose of considering the removal of more than 5,000 voters from the rolls before the upcoming November election. If the petitioners prevail and the DeKalb County Board of Registration and Elections is forced to proceed with challenge hearings, this could result in the illegal removal of voters, a violation of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA).

So far, DeKalb County election officials have applied the law correctly. They have declined to convene challenge hearings and they have rebuffed the petitioners’ allegations that thousands of voters, many of whom are voters of color, are invalidly registered. If allowed, public challenge hearings could disrupt the administration of the November election and create chaos by causing the removal of voters on the eve of Election Day—perhaps after early voting has started. The motion to intervene intends to head off any purge proceedings before any voters are removed and the need to bring an NVRA action in federal court arises. Voting rights advocates also seek to protect the rights of clients in two cases that are ongoing in federal court, *New Georgia Project v. Raffensperger* (N.D. Ga.) and *Georgia NAACP v. Raffensperger* (N.D. Ga.), in which they allege that certain counties have violated the NVRA by removing eligible voters from the rolls as a result of voter challenges alleging that those individuals have moved.

SEE THE FULL FILING HERE: [Motion to Intervene](#) and [Motion to Dismiss](#)

“The last-minute voter challenges cannot stand because they are barred by federal law under the National Voter Registration Act. These challenges are a suppression tactic aimed at sowing confusion and attempting to attack the right of voters in DeKalb County, which is majority-Black,” **said Janai Nelson, President and Director-Counsel of the Legal Defense Fund (LDF)**. “That is why we are seeking to intervene in this case and are filing a proposed motion to dismiss, urging the court to quickly dismiss this baseless attack on the right to vote. LDF will continue to uphold the rights of Black voters and combat voter suppression tactics like baseless mass challenges on the eve of the upcoming election.”

“This last-minute attempt to purge more than 5,000 Georgia voters is simply a vehicle to sow chaos to undermine our election process,” **said Judith Browne Dianis, Executive Director of Advancement Project**. “Demanding that DeKalb County hold public challenge hearings would give partisan operatives an opportunity to publicly air trumped up charges of illegal voting—when in fact the petitioners are attempting to suppress the vote in a predominantly Black county.”

“This kind of lawsuit is a direct attack on voters and ignores the 90-day window of the NVRA, which ensures voters aren’t removed from the rolls right before the election,” **said Jay Young, senior director of voting rights and democracy for Common Cause**. “Pointless lawsuits like these are an attempt to prevent the public's trust in our safe elections. They are a distraction and scare tactic intended to sow doubt in our secure election process.”

“It does not seem like mere coincidence that this eleventh-hour attempt to purge voters wholesale from the rolls is filed in a county where the majority of the population is Black,” **said Damon Hewitt, president and executive director of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law**. “Whether this ploy is a desperate gambit to make it more difficult for people to vote for their candidates of choice, or part of a plan to set up a challenge to the election if certain people are unhappy with the results, it cannot be tolerated. Let there be no mistake about it: this suit, as are the others popping up in other Georgia counties and in other states — reflects a fear to let the election be decided by the voters. It is an attack on democracy.”

“It’s clear the DeKalb Republican Party’s sole interest is suppressing votes in a majority-Black, densely populated, Metro Atlanta county,” **said Dr. Roslyn Satchel, CEO of New Georgia Project**. “Mass voter challenges have and always will be a distraction from the real and important work of ensuring Georgia’s elections run smoothly and expanding access to the ballot box. With only 35 days before Election Day and exactly two weeks until the start of early voting, our litigation is necessary to protect the rights of voters of color in Georgia as they head to the polls to determine the future of our country.”

“Every Georgia voter deserves free and fair elections, and the DeKalb officials upheld the law by denying eleventh hour attempts to create more barriers for Black voters and other voters of color,” **said Clayola Brown, President of A. Philip Randolph Institute**. “Voting is not partisan.”

“We are vehemently opposed to any efforts to purge voters at this late stage in the election cycle, and only days away from the voter registration deadline. Eligible voters will not have time to re-register if they are erroneously purged,” **said Helen Butler, executive director Georgia Coalition for the People’s Agenda**. “There has been an effective process in place for years to update the voter rolls, so their lawsuit is essentially much ado about nothing.”

“For over a century, the NAACP has remained laser-focused on the mobilization, and protection of Black voters. We know that the advancement of our democracy depends on those in power

working to defend its founding principles," **said Derrick Johnson, President & CEO, NAACP.** "Make no mistake - these extremist agents are actively working to undermine our democracy and silence our voices. We're not backing down. The filing of today's lawsuit is one of many crucial steps we are taking to make sure democracy works for everybody. We won't stop until every vote is counted and every voice is heard."

"As home to one of the largest Black communities in the nation, Georgia is no stranger to voter suppression. We know the power we hold, and we're prepared to exercise it," **said Gerald Griggs, President, Georgia State Conference of the NAACP.** "Whether it's canvassing on the corner, or filing suits to secure our votes, the NAACP will continue to ensure that our voices are heard. From criminal justice to reproductive rights, too much is at stake for us to cower. Let's get to work."

"Voters must be able to trust that they will not be removed from the rolls unlawfully," **said Nichola Hines, president of the League of Women Voters of Georgia.** "Allowing unlawful purges of voters in violation of the NVRA undermines our democracy and disenfranchises Georgia voters who deserve to have their voices heard."

"Ever since Georgia gave the green light to frivolous voter challenges and voter intimidation through SB 202, allowing any Georgia citizen to bring an unlimited number of challenges to the voting rights of their fellow citizens, the voting rights of our most vulnerable people have been put on the chopping block," **said Bradley Heard, deputy legal director, democracy and voting rights, Southern Poverty Law Center.** "Intimidation tactics meant to challenge the constitutional right to vote burden the electorate and those that serve to protect the integrity of the vote. We are moving to intervene so that the court can provide clarity and mitigate any harm to voters during this critical election year."

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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.