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LDF Issues Statement on Intimidation of Ballot Counters

Today, Sherrilyn Ifill, President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) issued the following statement regarding attempts to intimidate ballot counters in multiple states:

“As election officials have continued to work tirelessly through a second night in multiple states to ensure that every vote is counted, alarming incidents of intimidation targeting these officials are on the rise. We have seen numerous reports of armed individuals among those who have arrived at ballot-counting locations to try and stop the process. In some instances, as in Georgia, the intimidation has been in the demand to count votes. Ballot counters should be free to execute their functions free from intimidation of any sort.

“The targeting of ballot counts in predominantly-Black jurisdictions is especially disturbing and potentially violates longstanding laws concerning race-based election interference. These attempts to influence the outcome of the general election by disrupting the legal process by which votes are counted is a direct attack on our political process and must be stopped immediately. Traditionally, the counting of ballots in every election goes beyond Election Day and is a public process witnessed by representatives of both parties. That is as true in municipal elections as when the nation chooses its next president. At the core of our democracy is the right of every voter to have their vote count – whether they vote early, by mail, or in person on Election Day. Those votes are counted under strict guidelines by election officials across the country and that process must be protected at all costs.

“We call on all applicable federal, state, and local authorities prioritize the protection of ballot counters and to investigate these incidents — and hold those who coordinated and implemented them accountable to the fullest extent of the law. LDF will continue to prioritize the monitoring reports of these incidents, and to demand accountability and action from applicable government and law enforcement officials throughout the country.”

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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.