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**Sherrilyn Ifill statement on historic election results, need for restored
Voting Rights Act**

Sherrilyn Ifill, president and director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), issued the following statement about yesterday's midterm elections:

"Yesterday's election showcased our democracy's many strengths, and it revealed its persistent weaknesses. Across the nation, millions of Americans exercised their most fundamental right, a right that remains all too rare in our world: the right to vote. They sent an unprecedented number of women to Congress, including the first Native American women and the first Muslim-American women to serve in that body. They approved historic ballot measures that will make our nation more just, like Florida's Amendment 4, which restores voting rights to more than a million Americans, the largest expansion of the electorate in decades. In Michigan and Maryland, voters approved amendments that will allow people to register and vote on Election Day itself. And in Louisiana, voters amended the state constitution to require a unanimous jury for felony convictions, striking down a shameful remnant of Jim Crow.

"But yesterday, far too many Americans attempted to exercise their right to vote but were frustrated by malfunctioning machines, untrained poll workers, out-of-date poll lists, changed polling sites, and long lines, forcing many determined voters to wait for hours in some case more than four hours to cast a ballot.

"And this election powerfully demonstrated the ongoing and indeed increased impact of voter suppression on racial minorities. In the weeks leading up to the election, state officials in Georgia, North Dakota, Texas, Kansas, and elsewhere erected barriers to voting that were targeted at minority communities. Some of these schemes were audacious and explicit, others were more subtle. Litigation has been filed in multiple states to address these injustices. Relief did not come in time for this election in a number of those cases, leaving minority voters without recourse as they attempted to exercise their fundamental right to vote. This election leaves no doubt that the newly elected Congress must do what should have been done five years ago, after the Supreme Court's ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder*: pass an amendment to restore the Voting Rights Act to its full power.

"This should not be a controversial issue. It is not an issue of party or ideology, but of democracy. It is a test of our commitment to the idea that every citizen should have a say in

who governs this nation, and how they govern it. Fulfilling that commitment will not be easy. But if we are to stay true to our deepest principles and our highest ideals, it is necessary.”

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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.