

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Civil Rights Groups: Electoral Count Act Reform is Necessary; Congress Must Also Address Racial Discrimination in Voting

WASHINGTON — Leading civil rights organizations released the following joint statement urging Congress to fully address the assault on our democracy, including urgent threats to voting rights for people of color:

“The undersigned organizations welcome the introduction of legislation to reform the Electoral Count Act of 1887 (“ECA”). The deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, which sought to overturn the results of a presidential election, was an unprecedented and dangerous assault on our democracy. The House Select Committee hearings continue to document the myriad forms of abuse of power and office that fomented and facilitated this attack, and we join the call for full accountability of all of those involved, including at the highest level. We can never allow this to happen again. The provisions in the bill are intended to address any ambiguity in the ECA. We look forward to Congress carefully reviewing and strengthening the current proposal to ensure that final legislation eliminates all paths to undermining the votes and voices of our increasingly diverse electorate.

“While discussion of critical measures to prevent another frontal challenge to the electoral count process is valuable, we must again highlight that reforming the ECA is not enough to protect our democracy in this fragile moment. At the beginning of the Senate’s bipartisan efforts to reform the ECA, many of the undersigned organizations sent a [letter](#) to the Senate urging it to directly confront increasing racial discrimination in voting.

“We know all too well that the January 6 attack on our democracy—just like the increasing attacks on the right to vote—was rooted in white supremacy and represented a backlash to increased political participation by communities of color. These threats continue in full force and must be addressed immediately by this Congress if we hope to secure and safeguard an inclusive multiracial democracy in which everyone can participate. Although companion legislation released alongside the ECA reform proposal speaks to some aspects of

election administration, it does nothing to address voting discrimination, and therefore fails to address a key root cause of the insurrection. We hope that, as the Senate considers necessary ECA reform, it can also devote time and resources to addressing urgent threats to voting rights for people of color across the United States.”

The statement was signed by the following organizational leaders:

- Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law President and Executive Director Damon Hewitt
- The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights Executive Vice President for Government Affairs Jesselyn McCurdy
- American Civil Liberties Union Executive Director Anthony D. Romero
- The Legal Defense Fund (LDF) Director of Policy Lisa Cylar Barrett
- Asian American Advancing Justice - AAJC President and Executive Director John C. Yang
- The Native American Rights Fund Executive Director John E. Echohawk
- Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund Chief Policy Officer LaShawn Warren
- Demos President Taifa Smith Butler

About the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law – The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to mobilize the nation’s leading lawyers as agents for change in the Civil Rights Movement. Today, the Lawyers’ Committee uses legal advocacy to achieve racial justice, fighting inside and outside the courts to ensure that Black people and other people of color have the voice, opportunity, and power to make the promises of our democracy real. For more information, please visit <https://lawyerscommittee.org>

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights is a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 230 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States. The Leadership Conference works toward an America as good as its ideals. For more information on The Leadership Conference and its member organizations, visit www.civilrights.org.

For more than 100 years, the [ACLU](http://aclu.org) has worked in courts, legislatures, and communities to protect the constitutional rights of all people. With a nationwide network of offices and millions of members and supporters, the ACLU takes on the toughest civil liberties fights in pursuit of liberty and justice for all.

Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund](http://ldf.org) (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.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC has a mission to advance the civil and human rights of Asian Americans and to build and promote a fair and equitable society for all. Visit our website at advancingjustice-aaajc.org

NARF is a non-profit 501c(3) organization focused on applying existing laws and treaties to guarantee that federal and state governments live up to their legal obligations to Native Americans. Since 1970, [the Native](http://thenative.org)

American Rights Fund (NARF) has provided specialized legal assistance to Indian tribes, organizations, and individuals nationwide to assert and defend the most important Native rights.

SPLC Action Fund is a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements, and advance the human rights of all people. SPLC Action Fund is the 501(c)4 affiliate organization to the Southern Poverty Law Center. For more information, visit www.splcactionfund.org.

Demos is a think tank that powers the movement for a just, inclusive, multiracial democracy. Through cutting-edge policy research, inspiring litigation, and deep relationships with grassroots organizations, Demos champions solutions that will create a democracy and economy rooted in racial equity.

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