

Federal Appeals Court Blocks Florida Law That Undermines Voting Rights Restoration

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ATLANTA — A federal appeals court upheld a ruling blocking a Florida law that created wealth-based hurdles to voting and significantly curtailed Florida's Voting Restoration Amendment, also known as Amendment 4, which sought to end lifetime disenfranchisement and automatically restore voting rights to 1.4 million Floridians.

The law would have disenfranchised hundreds of thousands of Florida voters by making the right to vote contingent on returning citizens' ability to pay all legal financial obligations.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the ACLU of Florida, the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law, and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund challenged Florida's law and had the following reactions to today's ruling by the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals:

"The court unanimously ruled that a person's right to vote cannot be contingent upon their ability to pay," said **Julie Ebenstein, senior staff attorney with the ACLU's Voting Rights Project**. "This law is a modern-day poll tax. This ruling recognizes the gravity of elected officials trying to circumvent Amendment 4 to create roadblocks to voting based on wealth."

"This is a great win for voting rights!" said **Myrna Perez, director of the Voting Rights and Elections program at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law**. "The Eleventh Circuit told the state of Florida what the rest of America already knows. You can't condition the right to vote on a person's wealth."

"The Voting Restoration Amendment passed with 5.2 million votes and was one of the largest expansions of voting rights in United States history," said **Daniel Tilley, legal director of the ACLU of Florida**. "Despite the state's best efforts to dismantle Amendment 4 through SB7066, today's ruling affirms what Floridians intended when they passed Amendment 4--to restore to returning citizens their right to vote."

“Today’s decision protects against Florida’s efforts to crassly undermine the historic citizen-led voter initiative that restored voting eligibility to more than 1.4 million individuals,” **Leah Aden, deputy director of litigation, NAACP Legal Defense Fund.** “By affirming a preliminary finding that predicated the ability to vote based on wealth is unconstitutional — particularly when Black people with felony convictions disproportionately lack access to wealth — we are able to continue our fight to ensure that ultimately all Floridians whose voting rights were rightfully restored through Amendment 4 can exercise that right.”

A copy of the opinion can be found [here](#):

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