



For Immediate Release
Thursday, July 17, 2025

LDF Media
media@naacpldf.org

LDF Commemorates the John Lewis Day of Action and Urges Lawmakers to Pass the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act

Today, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) honors the tremendous legacy of celebrated civil rights leader and former Georgia Congressman John Lewis. July 17 marks the fifth anniversary of his passing. As many celebrate this John Lewis National Day of Action, LDF urges legislators to take meaningful steps to protect voting rights for their constituents by passing the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA) along with other critical state and federal legislation such as the Freedom to Vote Act, the Native American Voting Rights Act, D.C. Statehood, and State Voting Rights Acts

In light of widespread attacks on the freedom to vote and the Supreme Court and other federal courts undercutting the landmark Voting Rights Act, the John R. Lewis VRAA will restore the vital [preclearance](#) program, a process that prevents states and localities with a history of discrimination in elections from implementing electoral changes without prior approval.

The VRAA would also strengthen Section Two of the Voting Rights Act, which was undercut by the recent Supreme Court *Brnovich* decision but was recently affirmed by the Supreme Court in their ruling on LDF's case, [Allen v. Milligan](#), in a major win in the fight against racial discrimination in redistricting.

In light of the John Lewis Day of Action, LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai Nelson issued the following statement:

“Congressman John Lewis’ legacy is synonymous with the fight for equal and guaranteed access to the polls for Black people in America. He was a stalwart champion of the foundational right to the franchise, and with his passing, he handed down to all of us the responsibility to advance that right and defend it wherever it is threatened.

“Black voters have surmounted tremendous obstacles in the journey to equal access to the ballot box, but that journey is far from finished. We’re witnessing new and increased efforts to pass anti-voter legislation targeting Black communities and other communities of color and to suppress the right to vote — from discriminatory purges planned in North Carolina to extreme mid-cycle gerrymandering threatened in Texas. We must put an end to it now. By passing the John R. Lewis VRAA, our elected officials can do their part to eliminate racial discrimination at the ballot box in order to ensure that every voice is heard within our elections. The Freedom to Vote Act, Native

American Voting Rights Act, D.C. Statehood, and State Voting Rights Acts are essential complements to the landmark legislation bearing Congressman Lewis' name.

“Congressman Lewis was a brilliant light keeping the darkness of hatred and bigotry at bay. We must continue to shine our own light now on injustice in order to, as he said, ‘redeem the soul of America’ at the ballot box and beyond.”

#

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 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.