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Voting Rights Advocates Announce Louisiana Voting Rights Act – Crucial Legislation to Protect Louisiana Voters from Discrimination

Today, Power Coalition for Equity and Justice and the Legal Defense Fund, along with hundreds of citizens from communities across Louisiana, gathered at the Louisiana Capitol to publicly announce the Louisiana Voting Rights Act (LAVRA). Filed as [SB 365](#), the LAVRA will act as a crucial safeguard for voters, particularly for Black voters and other voters of color that have faced extensive discrimination both in the past and today.

[A recording of the livestreamed press conference is available here.](#)

Louisiana voters have endured attacks on the right to vote for decades. Recently, those assaults on this fundamental right have increased from all angles, including polling site closures in predominantly Black neighborhoods, discriminatory redistricting efforts, and efforts to impose burdensome documentary requirements at the polls. In light of these dangers to a free, fair, and representative multiracial democracy, voter protections are critical now more than ever. And the LAVRA would go a long way to counteract both recent and historical efforts to diminish the voting power of Black Louisianians.

State Voting Rights Acts (State VRA) are powerful, practical, and popular. [78% of voters](#) across the country support their state legislators passing a State VRA. Louisiana can and should lead in protecting the right to vote and promoting inclusive democracy by adopting the LAVRA.

“A State Voting Rights Act is how Louisiana decides whether we are a democracy for everyone, or only for a few,” said **Ashley Shelton, Founder, President, and CEO of Power Coalition for Equity and Justice**. “At a time when federal protections are under threat, states have a responsibility to step up and protect the fundamental rights of their citizens. Louisiana has the opportunity to lead by ensuring that every voter, especially those historically excluded, has a fair chance to participate and be represented.”

“It is Louisiana’s sacred responsibility to protect voters’ rights at the ballot, not restrict them,” said **Janai Nelson, President and Director-Counsel of the Legal Defense Fund**. “Discrimination has run rampant in Louisiana elections for far too long. The Louisiana Voting Rights Act will provide many of the urgently needed protections that will help safeguard Black voters from attempts to weaken or silence their voices. Free, fair, and accessible elections are the beating heart of our democracy, and we are proud to continue with these partners in the centuries-long struggle to ensure that equal access to the ballot is not the exception but the standard in Louisiana.”

“Sixty years after the federal Voting Rights Act transformed American democracy, the protections that once expanded participation and representation are being steadily weakened,” said **Senator Royce Duplessis**. “I am proud to introduce the Louisiana State Voting Rights Act to ensure our state has strong, modern safeguards that protect every voter and every community. This legislation will help stop voter suppression, prevent unfair voting maps, and guarantee transparency and access in our elections. At its core, this bill affirms a simple principle: our democracy is strongest when every voice counts and every community is fairly represented.”

This legislation builds on the foundations of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, as well as successful State Voting Rights Acts enacted in [eight other states](#).

[To learn more about the LAVRA, visit here.](#)

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