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LDF Condemns Texas Special Session Called by Gov. Abbott to Force Passage of Voter Suppression and Anti-Free Speech Bills

Today, the 87th Texas legislature started a special session called by Governor Greg Abbott for the explicit purpose of forcing through measures that target Black and Brown Texans. Among these harmful measures is H.B. 3, a version of the omnibus voter suppression bill that failed to pass during the recently-ended regular legislative session.

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund Inc. (LDF) joins its partners across Texas in condemning the dangerous and anti-democratic agenda Gov. Abbott has set for this special session, which includes expanding upon a bill, H.B. 3979, that will prohibit discussion of race and racism in certain public school classes.

“Rather than seeking to ensure that all Texans have power by addressing the aging Texas electrical grid, or addressing the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis, Gov. Abbott is working to suppress the voice and influence of Black and Brown communities in Texas life,” said Kathryn Sadasivan, Redistricting Counsel at LDF. “This agenda carries over the racial animus that motivated the ‘election integrity’ bills during the legislature’s regular session, and further seeks to silence the voice and power of Black Texans with an anti-Critical Race Theory proposal to ban educators from truthfully teaching history. Texans deserve leadership focused on protecting their rights, rather than using state resources to suppress voting rights, free speech, and the lived experiences of communities of color.”

“Texas should be learning from its history of discrimination, including by prioritizing the protection of its most vulnerable residents and safeguarding their fundamental right to vote,” said Steven Lance, Policy Counsel at LDF. “Instead, this special legislative session is geared at enacting policies that would disproportionately harm Black and Latino voters, empower partisan poll watchers to the detriment of everyday voters, and inculcate Texan students with a whitewashed idea of America’s past. No legislator should support such policies.”

During Texas’ regular legislative session, which ended in May, thousands of Texans testified in opposition to H.B. 6 and S.B. 7, measures that would have severely restricted early voting — negatively impacting “Souls to the Polls,” when Black churchgoers traditionally vote early on Sundays — emboldened partisan poll watchers, prohibited mail-in ballot drop boxes, subjected election administrators to a slew of new election-related criminal offenses, and required the purging of voters based on responses to a jury summons, among other anti-democratic provisions. LDF submitted testimony in March calling for Texas lawmakers to vote down S.B. 7.

Following S.B. 7's failure to pass before the close of the regular legislative session, Gov. Abbott vetoed Article 10 of the state's budget to withhold pay from legislative staff and other state employees, effectively forcing Texas legislators to return for the special session.

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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. 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. 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. Follow LDF on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).