



For Immediate Release
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**LDF Statement on Today's Vote to Acquit the
President of the United States of Impeachment Charges**

Today, the United States Senate [voted to acquit](#) President Trump of both impeachment charges against him. This is a grave and serious moment for our country. The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is deeply concerned about the long-lasting ramifications that this Senate's decision will have on electoral integrity in the United States. Moreover, we are disturbed by myriad procedural flaws and rule of the law issues that occurred these proceedings, which we believe will forever taint the integrity of the Senate trial on this impeachment.

"The Senate's decisions in this impeachment trial ultimately leave our 2020 elections further vulnerable to conduct that reveals the vulnerability of our election system to manipulation and foreign influence. Foreign interference is a fundamental threat to the integrity of our elections. After fighting for decades to ensure that African Americans, who were specifically targeted by foreign powers in the 2016 federal elections, have equal access to the ballot box, the civil rights community is acutely aware that our election system needs to be safeguarded from improper and illegal influence, so Americans can freely elect their preferred candidates to represent their interests. Today it's clear that free and fair elections are far from a guarantee in this country, and we will need to use all of our collective power to demand protections for our 2020 election," said Sherrilyn Ifill, President & Director-Counsel of LDF.

We believe the rule of law is critical to our democracy, and so we are also deeply troubled by the Senate's failure to hear evidence and witnesses at the trial – the most basic of requirements for legitimate proceedings. That decision will forever taint these proceedings. "LDF recognizes that it is critically important to ensure that trials are conducted in a fair and transparent manner," said Janai Nelson, LDF's Associate Director-Counsel. "The fact that Senate Republicans did not adhere to this standard during proceedings that determined the president's fitness for office is reprehensible – and exposes to Americans that these officials are more committed to party than country, at the expense of our democracy. This fundamentally rushed and problematic trial undermined the integrity of this critical body, our elections, and our commitment to the rule of law."

While this trial was inherently flawed, its significant shortcomings must also not distract us from what is now an exceedingly urgent task: protecting our 2020 elections.

Indeed, it is essential that senators move to pass legislation like the [Shield Act](#), which would help guarantee that our elections are free from interference. This important legislation would create more transparency in online political advertisements, close loopholes that permit foreign governments to spend in American elections, restrict how U.S. political candidates can interact with foreign governments, mandate that illicit campaign assistance offers are reported to U.S. authorities, and prohibit the release of deceptive information about voting procedures.

“Even after the Senate Intelligence Committee confirmed that Russians interfered in our presidential election and foreign interests engaged in a widespread attempt to penetrate the voting systems in nearly 30 states, our election system remains undefended,” said Lisa Cylar Barrett, LDF’s Director of Policy. “The Shield Act, which has already passed in the House, would introduce several comprehensive measures to safeguard our election system and ensure that Americans’ interests and voices are truly represented at the ballot box. This important legislation, and many other election protection bills, are currently sitting on Senate Majority Leader McConnell’s desk, waiting for a vote. The Majority Leader must immediately advance these bills – and Senators must pass them – to ensure that our upcoming election is protected from outside interference.”

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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.

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