

December 15, 2024

Michigan House
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

RE: PASS THE MICHIGAN VOTING RIGHTS ACT (S.B. 401, 402, 403, & 404)

Dear Members of the Michigan House,

We write to urge you to pass the Michigan Voting Rights Act (“MIVRA” or S.B. 401, 402, 403, and 404), which passed the Senate in September. If enacted, the MIVRA would be one of the most significant civil rights laws in Michigan’s history. It will cement Michigan’s recent pro-democracy gains by protecting the freedom to vote for all Michiganders.

Heading into 2025 and beyond, the best way we can prepare for attacks on voting rights and democracy at the federal level is to pass the MIVRA now. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Michigan voters [want their representatives](#) to prioritize passing a MIVRA. This chance won’t come again soon, and we cannot afford to wait.

The MIVRA is a top priority for the undersigned organizations.

By passing the MIVRA, Michigan has an opportunity to create a more equitable and inclusive democracy. Despite recent progress, voters of color, non-English speakers, and voters with disabilities in Michigan continue to face barriers to equal participation in our democracy. In recent years, Michigan has experienced racially targeted voter intimidation and efforts to disenfranchise voters of color. Michigan needs stronger protections to address discriminatory voting practices.

Federal law alone does not do enough to protect Michigan voters. Section 2 of the Federal Voting Rights Act (“VRA”) provides crucial protections against racial discrimination in voting, but these protections have been weakened by federal courts in recent years. In *Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee*, for instance, the Supreme Court imposed new burdens on voters seeking to vindicate their voting rights in court under Section 2. Moreover, litigation under Section 2 can be expensive, time consuming, and complex. And, the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, which covers Michigan, further weakened Section 2 of the federal VRA by barring “coalition” claims, i.e., claims arising when plaintiffs seek a remedy vindicating the rights of two or more minority groups facing similar discrimination from a redistricting map or method of election. Now more than ever, we need state leaders to stand up for equal, inclusive democracy, and Michigan now has the opportunity to do just that.

The MIVRA will make Michigan’s democracy more inclusive by:

- Expanding protections for voters with disabilities.
- Creating a central public hub for election data and information to promote transparency.
- Expanding language assistance for voters with limited English proficiency.
- Enshrining robust protections against voter suppression and vote dilution into state law.

- Protecting access to curbside voting.
- Ensuring that voters receive advanced notice of changes to key electoral procedures.
- Providing efficient and practical ways to resolve barriers to equal participation in local democracy before litigation occurs.
- Launching a “preapproval” remedy that allows courts to hold local governments accountable for up to ten years following a voting rights violation.

The MIVRA builds upon successful state VRAs that have already passed in California, Washington, Oregon, Virginia, New York, Connecticut, and Minnesota. The MIVRA will carry this momentum forward and provide some of the most robust state-level voting protections in the country.

Michigan can and should cement its role as a national leader in protecting the rights of voters of color. We urge you to support the MIVRA and we stand ready to work with you to secure these crucial protections for Michigan voters.

Sincerely,

ACCESS	Generation Vote	Oakland Forward Action Fund
ACLU of Michigan	GIFFORDS	People For the American Way
Advancement Project	Gray Panthers of Metro Detroit	People Power United
Agape Social Justice LLC	Indivisible Fighting 9	Popular Democracy
All On The Line	Indivisible Huron Valley	Progress Michigan
All Voting is Local Action	Lansing Alumnae Chapter, Delta	Promote the Vote
APIA Vote-Michigan	Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc	Public Citizen
Asian American Legal Defense and	LatinoJustice PRLDEF	RankMiVote - Ranked Choice
Education Fund	League of Women Voters of	Voting for Michigan
Black Voters Matter Fund	Michigan	RepresentUs
Brennan Center for Justice	Legal Defense Fund	Restaurant Opportunities Center of
Campaign Legal Center	Lenawee Indivisible	Michigan
Charity for People Powered	MI Poder	Rising Voices
Democracy	Michigan AFL-CIO	SEIU Michigan
Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for	Michigan Country	Sierra Club
Civil Rights, Midwest Voting	Michigan League of Conservation	Sisters of Mercy in Michigan
Rights Program	Voters	Stand Up America
Citizens for Responsibility and	Michigan Unitarian Universalist	Statewide Indivisible Michigan
Ethics in Washington (CREW)	Social Justice Network	The Wisdom Institute
Clean Water Action	Michigan Voices	UAW International Union
Common Cause	More Equitable Democracy Action	UNITE HERE! Local 24
Congregation for Humanistic	Mothering Justice	UUCGT
Judaism-Detroit	Movement Advancement Project	Voters Not Politicians
Declaration for American Democracy	NAACP Michigan State Conference	Voting Access For All Coalition
Coalition	NALEO Educational Fund	Western Wayne County NAACP
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.	National Council of Jewish Women,	When We All Vote
Demos	Michigan	When You Vote-I Win
Detroit Disability Power	National Organization of Women	
Detroit RESULTS	National Urban League	
Fair Elections Center	National Women’s Law Center	
FairVote	Oakland Forward	