



# MINNESOTA NEEDS ITS OWN VOTING RIGHTS ACT

As Black voters face the greatest assault on voting rights since Jim Crow, Minnesota has an opportunity in 2024 to continue its progress advancing the freedom to vote and join the growing list of states protecting voters against unequal access to the ballot. State lawmakers have the opportunity to defend democracy by passing the Minnesota Voting Rights Act (the “MNVRA” or [HF 3527](#) / [SF 3994](#)).

## Minnesota Voters Are At Risk of Losing Critical Protections Against Racial Discrimination in Voting

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the [Eighth Circuit](#) recently held that voters and organizations that represent them can no longer bring lawsuits directly under Section 2 of the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA). This opinion limits the ability of individuals and civil rights groups from using the federal Voting Rights Act to combat racial discrimination in voting.

The MNVRA will codify the protections offered by the federal Voting Rights Act into Minnesota state law, and streamline them to make solving discrimination more efficient for both voters and local governments. The MNVRA will restore and strengthen the tools that were stripped by the Eighth Circuit.

Natasha DaVis and her daughters Natavia DaVis, middle, and Natasia DaVis waited in a large line to early vote, some up to two hours, at the Ramsey County Elections office in St. Paul, Minnesota, on Monday, November 2, 2020. Photo by Renee Jones Schneider/Star Tribune via Getty Images

Somali-American voters cast their ballots at Brian Coyle Community Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on November 3, 2020. Photo by Kerem Yucel / AFP



## The MNVRA Will Protect Voters of Color and Strengthen Minnesota's Democracy

It's time for Minnesota to set a new standard for protecting the right to vote. The MNVRA's provisions include:

### PROHIBITION AGAINST VOTER SUPPRESSION:

Confront voter suppression due to barriers that deny voting opportunities to voters of color.

### PROHIBITION AGAINST VOTE DILUTION:

Confront unfair districts or at-large elections that weaken or drown out the voices of Black voters and other voters of color.

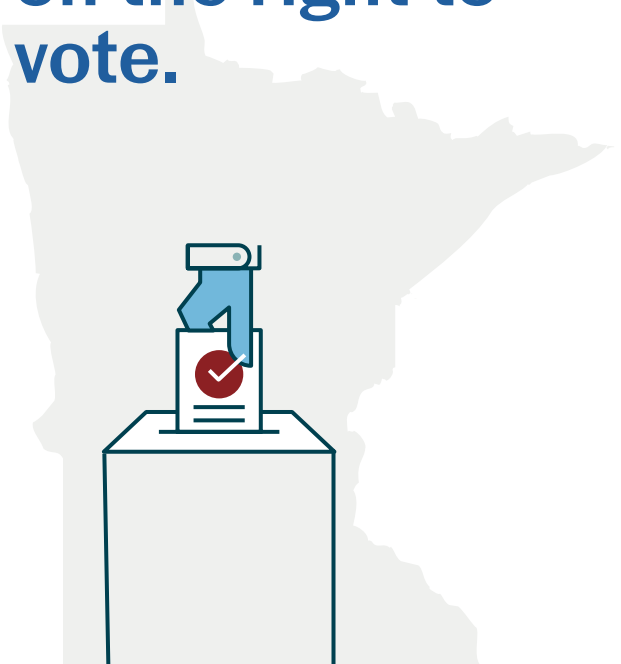
**EFFICIENT AND CLEAR RULES:** Adopt clear and efficient standards to make cases more predictable, efficient, and effective,

**NOTICE AND SAFE HARBOR:** Require good-faith negotiation before lawsuits to fix voting discrimination as efficiently and inexpensively as possible for all parties.

### ENSHRINING THE "DEMOCRACY CANON":

Instruct state judges to interpret election laws in a pro-voter way whenever reasonably possible.

# The MNVRA will help Minnesota fight discrimination in voting and become a national leader on the right to vote.



## The MNVRA Will Make Minnesota a National Leader

The MNVRA codifies and strengthens the protections in the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 and protections recently passed in [New York](#) and [Connecticut](#), as well as previous efforts in California, Washington, Oregon, and Virginia. The Legislature is considering the law now — just in time for Minnesota to lead as other states move backward and Congress struggles to move forward on voting rights.