



LDF's Prepared to Vote (PTV) campaign marshals LDF staff and local volunteers on Election Day to protect the ability of African-American voters to cast ballots and participate in the political process.

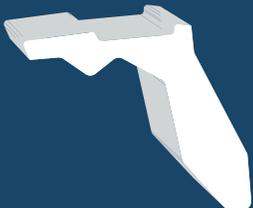
LDF lawyers and LDF-trained PTV volunteers are on the ground every year in both primary and general elections in targeted jurisdictions. For the 2018 midterms, PTV armed voters with state-specific voter guides and trainings containing important information about their state's election laws and how to prepare to vote. On November 6, 2018, LDF lawyers and PTV volunteers were on the ground at polling sites to monitor the fair administration of elections and respond to voting irregularities or instances of discrimination in 23 counties across seven states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, South Carolina, and Texas.

Despite high turnout, far too many voters faced significant burdens in exercising the right to vote, including malfunctioning machines, untrained poll workers, out-of-date poll lists, changed polling sites, and long lines, including some cases where it took more than four hours to cast a ballot. The civil rights Election Protection hotline reported receiving over 31,000 calls from voters seeking assistance. Below is a brief snapshot of a few of the voting issues our team observed on the ground and learned about on Election Day. *Democracy Defended*, our full report on the 2018 midterm elections, which will also include an analysis of pre-Election Day voter suppression activities, is forthcoming.



ALABAMA

In Jefferson, Mobile, and Shelby counties, Alabama voters encountered barriers to the ballot because of "inactive voter" lists, inaccurate voter registration lists, mismatches between addresses on photo ID and registered addresses, and poorly trained poll workers. In some instances, poll workers refused to permit voters placed on inactive lists to update their forms at the precincts, and in others incorrectly informed these voters that they could only vote by provisional ballot. Scores of voters in Madison County who registered before the state deadline, including students at Alabama A&M University, found that their names were not on the rolls on Election Day.



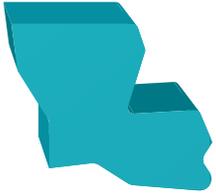
FLORIDA

In 2017, thousands of Puerto Rican voters were displaced by Hurricane Maria and resettled in Florida. On the night before Election Day, a federal judge issued an emergency order, reinforcing a September order obtained by LatinoJustice to compel over 30 counties in Florida to provide Spanish language ballots to voters in accordance with the requirements of the Voting Rights Act. Nevertheless, LatinoJustice reported noncompliance or partial compliance with this order in several counties. Numerous voters reported problems with confusing ballots, precinct changes, and long lines at Florida polls. In Orange County, Florida, more than 100 voters did not have correct information about their assigned polling locations and required assistance to find their correct precincts. Additionally, on the Sunday before Election Day (the last day for early voting in Florida) precincts in North Miami ran out of ballots due to malfunctioning printers. According to reports, this caused more than 200 voters to wait in a line extending half a block outside a North Miami library, and some voters reported wait times of more than three hours.



GEORGIA

In Gwinnett and Fulton counties, Georgia voters encountered long lines and significant delays, including wait times of more than three hours. Voters experienced malfunctioning voting machines at two precincts in Gwinnett County. Voters at those precincts stood in line and waited up to four hours to cast their ballots before the machines were fixed. In Grady County, a polling place was changed two weeks before Election Day. Adequate notice was not provided to voters who arrived at the closed polling place, leading to confusion on Election Day. Because the signage at the old polling place indicating that it was closed was inadequate, community members stood for hours in front of the building to direct voters to the new polling location. Voters in Fulton County encountered long lines of up to two hours as a result of an inadequate number of voting machines allocated to precincts.



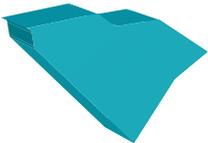
LOUISIANA

In Orleans and East Baton Rouge parishes, Louisiana voters experienced inadequate and improper polling place signage, registration challenges, and confusion about ID procedures. Some polling places lacked proper signage to indicate that they were a polling place. At other precincts, candidate and issue campaign signs were located within the restricted “campaign free zone.” Some voters required assistance receiving provisional ballots due to voter roll issues, and others needed help with voter ID affidavits if they lacked ID.



MISSOURI

In St. Louis County, voters received incorrect information from poll workers about the state’s photo ID requirement, and some voters were told they could not vote without ID. Voters in Jackson County reported confusion at their polling precincts due to outdated voter addresses, even when the voters had updated their addresses with election officials and brought updated ID. The poll workers required these voters to vote with provisional ballots and insisted they were at the wrong polling location. Voters at an eastern Kansas City polling location also experienced malfunctioning machines in the afternoon, raising questions about their ballots being counted. Voters reported being told to leave their ballots for polling officials to scan later or wait for the machines to be fixed.



SOUTH CAROLINA

In Richland and Charleston counties, voters endured extremely long lines due to poll worker and machine shortages. In Richland County, voters reported that machines were changing their votes—a problem also experienced by voters in Texas and Georgia. Election officials in Richland noted that there was only one technician assigned to recalibrate malfunctioning machines for every five polling places, resulting in long wait times during the morning hours. In Charleston County, on James Island and Johns Island, voters waited up to three hours during the evening to vote. Election officials complained about the lack of functioning machines, laptops for check-ins, and poll workers. Election officials in Charleston noted that although they tried to recruit 800 poll workers for Election Day, only 600 showed up. Polling sites in North Charleston suffered particularly long lines on Tuesday evening.



TEXAS

In Tarrant and Dallas counties, Texas voters encountered challenges with malfunctioning or broken machines, polling place changes, and long wait times for public transportation for voters with disabilities. At the Lakeside Recreation Center precinct, voters—most of whom were people of color—were turned away for attempting to vote at the wrong location. The precinct lines changed from the previous election, but the voters did not receive notice. In Harris County, long delays in the morning hours at polling sites around the county resulted in a judicial order to extend polling place evening hours at nine locations.

The barriers to the ballot observed by LDF lawyers, PTV volunteers, the media, and the civil rights community on Election Day 2018 revealed renewed efforts to restrict voters’ rights. They also underscored the ongoing impact of voter suppression on racial minorities and the need for greater protections and election reform. Through its PTV campaign, LDF will continue to ensure that all voters can exercise their fundamental right to vote and that every ballot is counted.

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The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (“LDF”) is the first and foremost civil and human rights law firm in the United States. Founded in 1940 under the leadership of Thurgood Marshall, LDF’s mission has always been transformative—to achieve racial justice, equality, and an inclusive society. LDF has been a separate organization from the NAACP since 1957.

This report was produced in collaboration with LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute. Launched in 2015, the Institute is a multidisciplinary center within LDF. The Institute complements LDF’s traditional litigation strengths, arming LDF with dedicated support for three critical capabilities in the fight for racial justice: research, targeted advocacy campaigns, and organizing.