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**LDF Media**  
[media@naacpldf.org](mailto:media@naacpldf.org)

## **Civil Rights, Voting Rights, Disability Rights Groups Sue Alabama Over SB 1's Extreme Anti-Voter Restrictions and Penalties**

**Montgomery, Ala.** — Today, a coalition of civil rights, voting rights and disability rights organizations [sued](#) Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall, Alabama's 42 District Attorneys, and Alabama Secretary of State Wes Allen to block Alabama's recently enacted Senate Bill 1 (SB 1). This law directly targets, drastically restricts, and severely penalizes basic nonpartisan civic engagement efforts that enable all Alabamians to access their right to vote.

The law, among the most restrictive of its kind ever passed, would criminalize most forms of helping voters apply for absentee ballots, with felony penalties ranging up to 20 years in prison. SB 1's cruel and unlawful restrictions harm voters who need assistance with their absentee ballot applications — particularly Black voters, elderly voters, incarcerated voters, voters with disabilities, and low-literacy voters — as well as nonpartisan civic engagement groups, including churches, working to help Alabamians participate in the political process. This extreme law is the latest development in Alabama's long history of restricting the political engagement of Black voters and other marginalized communities.

Alabama State Conference of the NAACP (Alabama NAACP), Greater Birmingham Ministries (GBM), League of Women Voters of Alabama (LWVAL), and Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP) are represented by Campaign Legal Center (CLC), Legal Defense Fund (LDF), Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), the American Civil Liberties Union of Alabama (ACLU-AL), and Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP) in their suit against the anti-voter law.

"SB1 takes Alabama backwards as it violates the law, restricts our basic Constitutional Amendment rights, obliterates freedom of speech," said **Benard Simelton, president of the Alabama State Conference of the NAACP**. "It marginalizes voters' access to the ballot box."

"SB1 represents the latest assault on Alabama voters who simply want their voices heard and their choices counted regardless of differing abilities, health status and unpredictable work schedules that require their voter participation be by absentee ballot and often with the support of friends, family, and civic organizations," said **Scott Douglas, executive director of Greater Birmingham Ministries**. "There is no 'voter integrity' in penalizing those who assist those who must vote absentee, only voter suppression."

“Voters who vote by absentee ballot have the right to access the ballot fairly and equitably,” said **Kathy Jones, president of the League of Women Voters of Alabama**. “Many Alabama voters with disabilities rely on the help of neighbors, caregivers, or voter services organizations to successfully cast their absentee ballots. The League of Women Voters of Alabama will continue to fight unjust laws like SB1 because our state should be making it easier for people to vote, not building barriers to suppress the vote.”

“SB1 is part of a concerning trend of anti-voter state legislatures restricting equal access to the ballot for voters with disabilities,” said **Celina Stewart, chief counsel at the League of Women Voters of the United States**. “These laws specifically target the individuals and organizations that voters with disabilities depend on to access, complete, and cast an absentee ballot. The League of Women Voters is actively challenging these laws and is committed to fighting voter suppression nationwide.”

“For many voters with disabilities, absentee voting may be the only practical option to be heard and have their voices counted,” said **William Van Der Pol, Jr., senior trial counsel for Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program**. “SB1 poses additional barriers to this critical right that are neither necessary nor legal.”

"SB 1 is an egregious attack on Alabama's voters and those working tirelessly to help folks access our democracy," said **Danielle Lang, senior director of voting rights at Campaign Legal Center**. “This law takes us backwards and attacks a fundamental aspect of our sacred freedom of speech — violating the Constitution and hurting Alabamians who rely on nonpartisan, good-government groups to help make their voices heard at the ballot box. We look forward to fighting alongside our partners against this extreme anti-voter law.”

"Rather than helping Alabamians exercise their right to vote, lawmakers passed SB1 to criminalize them," said **Alison Mollman, legal director at the ACLU of Alabama**. "This extreme and unnecessary law makes it a Class B felony for a person or organization to assist someone with their absentee ballot application. In Alabama, other Class B felony offenses include manslaughter, statutory rape, and first-degree theft of property. SB1 is unconstitutional and the ACLU of Alabama is proud to stand alongside our clients to ensure that their constitutional rights are protected."

“SB1 is a cruel manifestation of the rapid, unceasing attacks on the tenets of our democracy that have unfolded across the country,” said **Anuja Thatte, assistant counsel at the Legal Defense Fund**. “The criminalization of those who assist voters and help strengthen our political process is unpatriotic and undermines our nation’s promise of a multi-ethnic, multi-racial, inclusive democracy. LDF is proud to join our clients and partners to continue the fight to protect the fundamental right to vote - the people of Alabama and the United States deserve no less.”

“The march for voting rights started in Alabama and continues today as we face one of the most restrictive bills this state has seen in recent memory,” said **Jess Unger, senior staff attorney**

**for voting rights at Southern Poverty Law Center.** “Together, with our partners and clients, we will protect the fundamental right to vote and — no matter what barriers are put in place — to ensure every voice in Alabama is heard.”

The lawsuit filed today challenges SB 1 as violating the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution, the Voting Rights Act, and the Help America Vote Act of 2002.

Read the lawsuit [here](#).