

Connecticut Needs Its Own Voting Rights Act

Despite Connecticut’s progressive reputation, there are still discriminatory barriers to equal participation in our democracy for voters of color and people whose first language isn’t English. As Black and Brown voters across the country face the greatest assault on their rights since the era of Jim Crow, we need Connecticut to set the standard for state-level voting rights. Connecticut can do so by adopting [S.B. 471, An Act Concerning Elections and State Voting Rights](#).

Connecticut Voters Face Persistent Barriers and Discrimination

With Black and Latino voters facing longer voting lines, no early voting, and limited access to absentee voting, Connecticut has some of the most restrictive voting laws in the nation. Conditions that can foster voting discrimination — such as unfair districts or at-large systems that weaken Black and Brown voting power, inaccessible polling locations, insufficient language assistance for voters who don’t speak English, and even outright voter intimidation — endure throughout the Nutmeg State. One reason why is that many voting rights abuses happen at the local level, where the legal tools and resources to investigate and prosecute wrongdoing aren’t available.

Voters wait to cast their ballots at the Salvation Army of Stamford, Connecticut on November 3, 2020. Photo by Timothy A. Clary/AFP via Getty Images



S.B. 471 Will Protect Voters of Color and Strengthen Connecticut's Democracy

It's time for Connecticut to set a new standard for protecting the right to vote. [S.B. 471](#) will do just that through:

Launching a "preclearance" program that puts the burden on local governments with records of discrimination to prove that certain voting changes won't harm voters of color before they can go into effect.

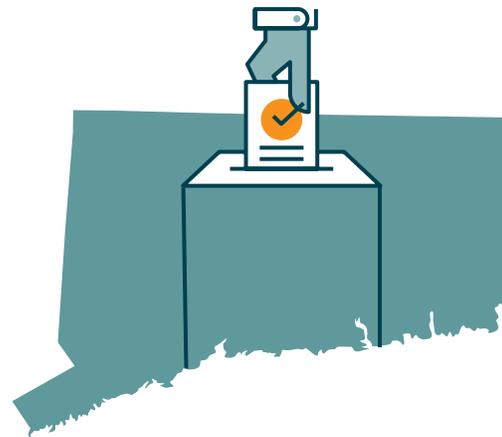
Providing new legal tools to fight discriminatory voting rules in court.

Expanding language assistance for voters with limited English proficiency.

Creating strong protections against voter intimidation, deception, or obstruction.

Creating a central hub for election data and demographic information that will empower officials and community members to ensure accessible elections.

S.B. 471 will help Connecticut fight discrimination at home and become a national leader on the right to vote.



S.B. 471 Will Make Connecticut a National Leader

The tremendous voter-suppression efforts that have arisen recently make this a perilous time for our democracy. Congress, the federal courts, and the states must stand up for voting rights. The whole nation needs Connecticut's example. If passed, [S.B. 471](#) will be one of the most comprehensive state-level voting rights acts in the country, building on successful laws already on the books in California, Washington, Oregon, and Virginia—and efforts under way now in New York. **NOW IS CONNECTICUT'S TIME TO LEAD.**