



For Immediate Release
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LDF Media
212-965-2200 / media@naacpldf.org

**LDF Issues Statement Calling for Federal Voting Rights Protections on the
56th Anniversary of Voting Rights Act**

Today marks the 56th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, one of the most critical civil rights laws ever passed. Since its founding in 1940 by Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) has been a leader in the fight to secure, protect, and advance the voting rights of Black voters and other communities of color. However, this anniversary is not simply a time to celebrate the legacy of the VRA. It also serves as a stark reminder of the threats to voting rights in this country and a call to action to restore this law to its full power. Sherrilyn Ifill, LDF's President and Director-Counsel, issued the following statement on this matter:

“Today we celebrate and honor the determination, vision, and courage of those who worked and sacrificed to ensure the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 – perhaps the most important and consequential statute of the 20th century to advance American democracy. They met the moment, ensuring the millions of Black voters disenfranchised by racist voter suppression schemes would have meaningful access to the political process as full citizens as guaranteed by the 14th Amendment. They sacrificed – and some risked their lives. They braved and overcame political opposition and cynicism.

“Now, we must meet the current moment — to strengthen the Act and to repair the damage wrought by Supreme Court decisions and the wave of voter suppression laws now advanced by states to keep Black voters from full participation in the political process. LDF remains committed as we have since our founding to using every tool available to protect, secure, and defend the right to vote for the communities we represent. No political obstruction, no Senate procedural rule, no arbitrary demand of any political leaders can be permitted to overcome the constitutional right of Black voters.

“Indeed, Congress has full authority to prevent these suppressive attacks and a Constitutional duty to protect voting rights, and, yet, federal lawmakers are failing to safeguard the rights of the very people who gave them their seats at the table. We are in a state of emergency in our democracy — and we cannot out-litigate or out-organize the ceaseless deluge of threats to the right to vote, nor should there be an expectation that the onus is on civil rights groups to serve as the sole guardians of this fundamental right.

“It is past time for Congress to implement sweeping voting rights protections for all and restore the Voting Rights Act to its full power. Lawmakers must immediately pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the For the People Act to ensure that we do not continue on this trajectory of democratic backsliding — and guarantee equal access to the ballot box for every eligible voter.”

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate

from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Follow LDF on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).