



February 22, 2021

Sent via email

Special Committee on Election Integrity
Georgia House of Representatives
131-A State Capitol
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Re: Opposition to House Bill 531

Dear Chair Fleming and Committee Members:

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (“LDF”) and SPLC Action Fund (“SPLC Action”) write to express in the strongest possible terms our opposition to (i) various provisions in House Bill (“H.B.”) 531, (ii) the timing of this bill on the heels of ever-growing participation by Georgians in elections, and (iii) the process for how this Committee is considering this bill. We are deeply concerned the enactment of H.B. 531 will create unnecessary barriers and burdens on voters that disproportionately impact racial minority, low-income, elderly, rural, disabled and student voters and may violate federal laws, including the First, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. For these reasons and those detailed below, we urge you to vote no on H.B. 531 and immediately withdraw it.

As nonprofit, nonpartisan civil rights and racial justice organizations, our aim is to ensure that all voters, particularly Black voters and other voters of color, have full, meaningful, and non-burdensome access to the one fundamental right that is preservative of all other rights: the right of citizens to access the ballot box and elect candidates of their choice. In this way, the vote is both a tangible measure of what we are and aspire to be as a nation. For these reasons, we, along with other voting rights and pro-democracy groups, have enthusiastically supported the expansion of equitable voting options, including absentee and advance voting, in Georgia.

Equitable voting options have been critical to ensuring Georgia voters can safely, securely, and freely participate in our democracy. They also reflect the straightforward understanding that increasing voting access builds a healthier and more inclusive democracy. The availability of equitable voting options made it possible for Georgia voters to turn out in historic numbers for the November 3, 2020

general election and January 5, 2021 runoff election.¹ To ensure the endurance and stability of this historic turnout, the Georgia Legislature should be considering measures that would preserve and expand voting rights and voting access.

Yet H.B. 531 is written to undermine significant progress to expand voting rights and ballot access in Georgia, especially for voters of color. Although we have concerns about several provisions with the original and proposed substitute iteration this bill, in this letter we focus your attention to Sections 11, 12, 15 in the substitute iteration of H.B. 531, as well as to deficiencies in the legislative process. For the reasons detailed below, we urge you to vote no on H.B. 531 and withdraw it from any further committee hearings.

I. Section 11 – Photo Identification Requirement²

This Committee’s hearing on Friday, February 19, 2021 heightens our concerns that H.B. 531’s proposed photo identification (“ID”) requirement is a solution in search of a problem.³ The purported justifications for a photo ID requirement to vote absentee remain pretextual. During the February 19 hearing, proponents failed to identify or offer concrete facts and data to corroborate claims that vote-by-mail procedures in Georgia are not secure.⁴ Nor could they. According to multiple statements by Governor Kemp,⁵ Lieutenant Governor Duncan,⁶ Secretary of State

¹ Brittany Gibson, *Record Turnout in Georgia, but Mostly Before Election Day*, The American Prospect (Jan. 5, 2021), <https://prospect.org/politics/record-turnout-in-georgia-but-mostly-before-election-day/>; Adam Edelman, *‘It’s Too Important Now’: Record Turnout, Black Voters Fuel Democratic Hopes in Georgia*, NBC News (Nov. 1, 2020), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/it-s-too-important-now-record-turnout-black-voters-fuel-n1245416>.

² This is Section 8 in the original iteration of H.B. 531.

³ Because this Committee’s February 19 hearing did not alleviate or mitigate our concerns, we refer members to our jointly submitted written testimony for ease of reference. Letter from LDF and SPLC Action, to the Georgia House of Representative Special Committee on Election Integrity (Feb. 19, 2021), <https://www.naacpldf.org/wp-content/uploads/021921-Written-Testimony-on-HB-531-LDF-and-SPLC.pdf> [hereinafter February 19 Written Testimony].

⁴ *Special Committee on Election Integrity 02.19.21 Hearing*, Special Committee on Election Integrity (Feb. 19, 2021), <https://livestream.com/accounts/25225474/events/8729747/videos/217751717> [hereinafter February 19 Committee Hearing].

⁵ Katherine Fung, *Gov. Kemp Says Ga. Fraud Claims ‘Have Left the Barn,’ After Trump Calls for His Resignation*, Newsweek (Dec. 30, 2020), <https://www.newsweek.com/gov-kemp-says-ga-fraud-claims-have-left-barn-after-trump-calls-his-resignation-1558140>.

⁶ Greg Bluestein, *Duncan Pushes Back on False Voter Fraud Claims: ‘We’re Better Than This,’* Atlanta Journal-Constitution (Dec. 1, 2020), <https://www.ajc.com/politics/politics-blog/duncan-pushes-back-on-false-voter-fraud-claims-were-better-than-this/GSNRMYELPBBADHZ5RQ7LDTVHCE/>.

Raffensperger,⁷ and Georgia Voting Systems Manager Gabriel Sterling,⁸ there was no evidence of widespread vote-by-mail fraud in Georgia, nor has there ever been.⁹

What is clear, however, is the photo ID requirement for absentee ballots would create new and unwarranted burdens to the fundamental right to vote for many voters. Moreover, these harms would not be borne equally among voters; H.B. 531's photo ID requirement disproportionately burdens racial minority, low-income, elderly, rural, disabled, and student voters. These voters often face challenges accessing DMV offices, photocopiers (or the ability to pay for photocopies), or the internet, and frequently have difficulty accessing a polling place to vote in-person, if vote-by-mail is unavailable to them. The photo ID requirement for absentee ballots, combined with the prospect of additional new restrictions on the right to vote, described below, pose an intolerable and discriminatory obstacle to the ballot box for Georgia voters, especially to voters of color.

II. Section 12 – Limitations on Drop Box Availability¹⁰

The addition of drop boxes during the June 2020, November 2020, and January 2021 elections offered Georgia voters a safe, secure, and accessible method to cast their ballots, particularly against a global pandemic that remains unabated.¹¹ The Georgia State Board of Elections (“State Board”) recognized the importance of trusting counties with the autonomy to make drop boxes broadly available to voters.¹² This flexibility was necessary to ensure voters had meaningful access to drop boxes, and it minimized crowding and alleviated the risk of long lines during in-person voting, as well as alleviated the concerns with mail delivery.

Section 12 will severely limit the availability of accessible, equitable, and safe drop boxes in four ways. *First*, Section 12 provides that drop boxes may only be

⁷ Quinn Scannlan, *We've Never Found Systemic Voter Fraud, Not Enough to Overturn the Election:* Georgia Secretary of State Raffensperger Says, ABC News (Dec. 6, 2020), <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/weve-found-systemic-fraud-overturn-election-georgia-secretary/story?id=74560956>.

⁸ Miles Parks, *Georgia Election Official: Don't Let Misinformation 'Suppress Your Own Vote,'* NPR (Jan. 4, 2020), <https://www.npr.org/2021/01/04/953321408/georgia-election-official-dont-let-misinformation-suppress-your-own-vote>.

⁹ *3rd Strike Against Voter Fraud Claims Means They're Out After Signature Audit Finds No Fraud*, Georgia Secretary of State (Dec. 29, 2020), https://sos.ga.gov/index.php/elections/3rd_strike_against_voter_fraud_claims_means_theyre_out_after_signature_audit_finds_no_fraud.

¹⁰ This is Section 9 in the original iteration of H.B. 531.

¹¹ See Emil Moffatt, *Georgia Voters Keep Filling Up Drop Boxes, But Could January Runoffs be Their Last Hurrah*, WABE (Dec. 16, 2020), <https://www.wabe.org/georgia-voters-keep-using-drop-boxes-but-could-january-runoffs-be-their-last-hurrah/>.

¹² For the emergency orders for the November 2020 general and January 2021 runoff elections, see State Board's SEB Rules 183-1-14-0.9-.15 and 183-1-14-0.8-.14, respectively. *Rules and Rulemaking of the State Election Board*, State Board (Feb. 2021), https://sos.ga.gov/index.php/elections/state_election_board.

established at advance voting locations, eliminating the flexibility provided to counties in recent elections to place drop boxes at any government office, which is important in counties where there are limited advance voting locations. *Second*, Section 12 mandates drop boxes will only be available during the same hours as the advancing voting location they are sited at. This restriction would eliminate the flexibility under the State Board’s rule that allowed counties to provide drop boxes during evening hours and on weekends. *Third*, Section 12 prohibits drop box availability after the advance voting period ends, eliminating the flexibility to provide drop boxes during the days immediately before the election and on Election Day itself. *Fourth*, Section 12 creates a new mandate for in-person “constant surveillance” of drop boxes by an election official, licensed security guard, or law enforcement official, which may pose serious voter intimidation concerns for Black voters and other voters of colors.¹³ These limitations are unnecessary and will dramatically reduce the efficacy of drop boxes, especially for voters of color.

Proponents of these provisions claim they are necessary to mitigate purported and unsubstantiated “election and voter fraud.” These arguments harken back to debunked conspiracy theories and corrosive myths.¹⁴ This Committee has not offered any concrete evidence to corroborate vague ballot collection or voter fraud. Nor could it. The State Board mandated specific security measures, including drop boxes being under continuous 24-hour video surveillance, for the January 2021 runoff election.¹⁵ Moreover, absentee ballots deposited through drop boxes go through the same identification processes as do absentee ballots received from other sources. Proponents have failed to identify any reasons why the protections in the State Board’s emergency rule for drop box availability and security are insufficient.

¹³ Sam Levine, *Georgia City Under Fire for Moving Polling Location to Police Station*, HuffPost (Oct. 9, 2019), https://www.huffpost.com/entry/jonesboro-georgia-polling-location_n_5d9e0979e4b06ddfc51272f0.

¹⁴ Alison Durkee, *‘No Evidence’ of Election Fraud in Battleground States, Statistical Analysis Finds as Trump Continues False Claims*, Forbes (Feb. 19, 2021), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alisondurkee/2021/02/19/no-evidence-of-election-fraud-in-battleground-states-statistical-analysis-finds-as-trump-continues-false-claims/?sh=252533183315>; *The Myth of Voter Fraud*, Brennan Center for Justice (Feb. 2021), <https://www.brennancenter.org/issues/ensure-every-american-can-vote/vote-suppression/myth-voter-fraud>; Jonathan Raymond, *Georgia Sec. of State Issued Letter Refuting Fraud Claims Ahead of Electoral Vote Count*, 11Alive (Jan. 7, 2021), <https://www.11alive.com/article/news/politics/elections/brad-raffensperger-election-fraud-debunking-letter/85-753d4d72-df54-4019-a493-095f418050eb>; Hope Yen, Jeff Amy, and Michael Balsamo, *AP FACT CHECK: Trump’s Made Up Claims of Fake Georgia Voters*, AP (Jan. 3, 2021), <https://apnews.com/article/ap-fact-check-donald-trump-georgia-elections-atlanta-c23d10e5299e14daee6109885f7dafa9>; Susan McCord, *Georgia Officials Debunk ‘Secret Ballot Suitcase’ Claim; To Recertify Results for Biden*, The August Chronicle (Dec. 7, 2020), <https://www.augustachronicle.com/story/news/politics/elections/presidential/2020/12/07/secret-suitcase-magic-ballots-actually-bag-ballots-packed/3858322001/>.

¹⁵ *RULE 183-1-14-0.8-14 Secure Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes*, State Board (Nov. 23, 2020), <https://sos.ga.gov/admin/uploads/SEB%20Rule%20183-1-14-0.8-14.pdf>.

Georgia voters—especially racial minority, low-income, elderly, disabled voters—have come to rely on drop boxes as a safe and an important option for casting a ballot. For many voters—especially those with personal or professional commitments that limit their availability during normal voting hours, or those with medical conditions—casting an in-person ballot during advance voting or on Election Day may be an untenable option. In addition, based on the widely reported issues with the United States Postal Service, which will continue to linger,¹⁶ some of these voters are not confident about returning their absentee ballot by mail. The only acceptable option for many voters is to bring their absentee ballot personally to a secure drop box.

It is therefore critical the Georgia Legislature provides counties with, at minimum, the same flexibility to make drop boxes available that was afforded by the State Board’s emergency rules, without the additional placement, security, and time restrictions proposed in Section 12.

III. Section 15 – Limitations on the Total Hours for Advance In-Person Voting and the Elimination of Sunday Voting and “Souls to the Polls”¹⁷

Advance voting opportunities are essential to ensuring voters can safely, securely, and freely participate in our democracy. They are important mechanisms that give voters the option to cast their ballots without facing the crowds and long lines on Election Day, as well as the flexibility to balance personal and professional obligations that making voting on Election Day untenable. These opportunities also reduce the number of voters left who still may cast their ballot on Election Day, thereby reducing crowding. Indeed, a Presidential Commission on Election Administration, a bipartisan commission of experts, has recommended the expansion of advance voting opportunities to both improve voters’ experiences with voting and promote confidence in election administration across the country.¹⁸ According to the Commission, “[s]tated simply, early voting offers Americans opportunities to participate in the electoral process that simply cannot be afforded by the [typically] contained twelve-hour period of the traditional Election Day.”¹⁹ Even Secretary of State Raffensberger has acknowledged the importance of advance voting, remarking: “Georgia is recognized as a national leader,” in part, because it has “at

¹⁶ Quinn Klinefelter, “*There’s No End in Sight: Mail Delivery Delays Continue Across the Country*,” NPR (Jan. 22, 2021), <https://www.npr.org/2021/01/22/959273022/theres-no-end-in-sight-mail-delivery-delays-continue-across-the-country>.

¹⁷ This is Section 12 in the original iteration of H.B. 531.

¹⁸ *The American Voting Experience: Report and Recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration*, Presidential Comm. on Election Administration, 1, 56 (Jan. 2014), <http://web.mit.edu/supportthevoter/www/files/2014/01/Amer-Voting-Exper-final-draft-01-09-14-508.pdf> (identifying as a key recommendation “states should expand opportunities to vote before Election Day”).

¹⁹ *Id.* at 55–56.

least 16 days of early voting.”²⁰ And the record-breaking turnout during the advance voting periods in the November 2020 and January 2021 elections demonstrate the ongoing need for meaningful and robust advance voting options for both election officials and voters.²¹

Despite this clear mandate supported by data and demand, however, H.B. 531 would severely limit the total number of advance voting hours and days. This bill restricts advance voting hours to only 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. during weekdays. If counties do not exercise discretion under this bill to extend those voting hours on weekdays, then voters within those counties could see a reduction of more than at least 100 hours of advance voting opportunities under H.B. 531. Likewise, H.B. 531 limits potential Saturday voting and eliminates Sunday voting altogether. In the 2020 general election, for example, over 250,000 or 9.9% of Georgia voters voted on the weekend, many of whom would no longer be able to do so under these provisions.

Black voters and other voters of colors would disproportionately be harmed by these cuts to weekend advance voting. For the 2020 November election, Black voters used weekend advance voting at a higher rate than white voters in 43 of 50 of Georgia’s largest counties.²² Most significantly, by eliminating Sunday voting, this bill would end “Souls to the Polls,” which is widely known in Georgia and elsewhere as a practice in which Black voters worship together on Sunday morning and then march or share rides to vote.²³ “Souls to the Polls” has been critical to increasing Black voter turnout in Georgia. The elimination of Sunday voting represents a direct assault on the right to vote for Black Georgians.

Georgia has been on notice for several years that Black and other voters of color rely on advance voting and Sunday voting in particular. Indeed, Georgia—in at least 2014, 2016, and 2018—faced widespread criticism and outcry when the Georgia Legislature repeatedly attempted to cut advance voting opportunities, including

²⁰ *Georgia Easy Voter Registration Options Break New Records*, Georgia Sec. of State (2020), https://sos.ga.gov/index.php/elections/georgia_easy_voter_registration_options_break_new_record_s.

²¹ *Supra* note 1.

²² Ari Berman, *Georgia Republicans are Doubling Down on Racist Voter Suppression*, Mother Jones (Feb. 19, 2021), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2021/02/georgia-republicans-voter-suppression-bill/>.

²³ Stephen Fowler, *Georgia Republicans File Sweeping Elections Bill to Limit Early and Absentee Voting*, GPB (Feb. 19, 2021), <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/19/969497398/georgia-republicans-file-sweeping-elections-bill-to-limit-early-and-absentee-vot>; Melissa Stern, *Prayer March and “Souls to the Polls” Take Place Leading Up to Georgia Runoff Election*, CBS46 (Jan 2., 2021), https://www.cbs46.com/news/prayer-march-and-souls-to-the-polls-take-place-leading-up-to-georgia-runoff-election/article_6469534a-4d46-11eb-8a62-b7d96bdfa9f0.html; Greg Bluestein, *Georgia Democrats Push “Souls to the Polls” With Sunday Voting*, Atlanta Journal-Constitution (Oct. 30, 2016), <https://www.ajc.com/blog/politics/georgia-democrats-push-souls-the-polls-with-sunday-voting/y1mEvfUULsYpl5oWAgZmIM/>.

Sunday voting.²⁴ Chair Fleming is well aware of these specific concerns because he was the lead sponsor of a bill submitted in 2014 seeking to cut weekend advance voting, despite the widespread opposition.²⁵

This Committee has not addressed or responded to these long-standing and well-documented concerns. Nor has it provided any explanation why limiting advance voting hours and days, including the eliminating of Sunday voting, serves a legitimate state interest. If passed, all these concerns described above will be exacerbated by continued widespread polling place closures throughout Georgia, which do not appear to show any signs of abatement,²⁶ as other limitations and restrictions to voting access described throughout this letter.

IV. Fiscal and Racial Impact Study

As we described in our February 19 Written Testimony, any bill, particularly one as here, with such far reaching implications for the fundamental right to vote cannot be properly assessed and evaluated without understanding its full impact. A full impact study is particularly important because the harms to the right to vote will be exacerbated by the interactions of multiple provisions that each limit voting options in different ways. For instance, burdens placed on absentee ballots and the restrictions on drop box availability would increase voter demand for in-person advance voting, yet this bill also restricts the total number of hours of advance voting and eliminates Sunday voting. These same provisions and others could also impose significant unfunded mandates on counties that faced budgetary difficulties in the 2020 election cycle.

LDF and SPLC Action have still not been made aware of any analysis conducted by this Committee or the Georgia General Assembly that H.B. 531 will not disproportionately harm voters of color and other voters. And this Committee did not respond to requests by witnesses to conduct a fiscal and racial impact during its February 19 hearing.²⁷ Accordingly, before any Committee vote, either this Committee or the Georgia General Assembly must study, analyze, and publicly identify the fiscal and racial impact of H.B. 531.

²⁴ See, e.g., *Democracy Diminished: State and Local Threats to Voting* Post-Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder 1, NAACP LDF, 21-22 (Nov. 13, 2020), <https://www.naacpldf.org/wp-content/uploads/State-local-responses-post-Shelby-11.12.20-final.pdf> [hereinafter *Democracy Diminished*].

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Democracy Diminished*, *supra* note 19, at 29–31; *Democracy Diverted: Polling Place Closures and the Right to Vote*, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights 1, 31–33 (Sept. 2019), <http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/reports/Democracy-Diverted.pdf>; see also *The Great Poll Closure*, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, (Nov. 1, 2016), <http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/reports/2016/poll-closure-report-web.pdf>.

²⁷ February 19 Committee Hearing, *supra* note 4.

V. Legislative Process

The legislative environment in which H.B. 531 has been offered calls for the rejection of this bill because it is not open, transparent, or inclusive. The original forty-eight page bill was only available through postings on social media hours before members of this Committee held a hearing at 3:00 p.m. on February 18, 2021 for Committee input and only if time allowed for in-person public input.²⁸ Then, less than twenty-four hours later, this Committee held a hearing before all its members at 9:30 a.m. on February 19, 2021. Before that hearing, this Committee indicated public testimony via remote means, including Zoom, would not be available. Yet Chair Fleming invited certain witnesses to testify via Zoom during that hearing. Only in response to a question during the hearing did Chair Fleming indicate for the first time that remote public testimony would be available but only if community members were invited by Committee members or reached out to Committee staff.²⁹

To be clear, under non-pandemic circumstances, it raises serious concerns to spring hearings on the public with effectively no notice, expect people to digest an omnibus bill seeking to change many of Georgia's election laws and procedures, and to orchestrate who can participate and exclude others. That stratagem, in the context of a pandemic, when people have to prepare and consider safeguards to participate in-person or prepare to participate remotely is unacceptable. Both individually, and collectively, this reflects an effort to shroud these proceedings in secrecy and unduly influence the legislative record.

Equally problematic, this Committee introduced a substitute bill for H.B. 531 at some point later Friday or over the weekend, which was fifty-nine pages. This version of H.B. 531 was not publicly posted on this Committee's website over the weekend or on this Committee's website. Instead, LDF, SPLC Action, and other organizations only learned of it through social media postings on Saturday, February 20, 2021.

The rapid scheduling of the hearings, along with either limited or unclear testimony guidelines, continues to exclude community members who may not be able to attend in-person hearings because they do not live in or near Atlanta, are concerned about contracting COVID-19, and/or have family or work obligations that prevent them from attending a 9:30 a.m. or earlier hearing. It is imperative that you hear from and listen to *all* community members who desire to provide public testimony—either oral or written—during your Committee hearings. Equally important, this Committee must post clear guidelines for providing and receiving public input well in advance of any hearing, including its February 22, 2021 hearing

²⁸ *Special Committee on Election Integrity 02.18.21 Hearing*, Special Committee on Election Integrity 00:00:00–00:01:50 (Feb. 18, 2021), <https://livestream.com/accounts/25225474/events/8737135/videos/217721873>.

²⁹ February 19 Committee Hearing, *supra* note 4, at 00:31:30–00:33:10.

at 3:00 p.m. As of Sunday, February 21, 2021, there are still no publicly posted guidelines for signing up for remote testimony.

For these reasons, we also request the Committee does *not* vote on H.B. 531 until later in the week of February 23.

VI. Federal Protections

It is likely that H.B. 531 violates various federal laws. The facts recited above, including the sequence of events (particularly the timing of the effort to impose this restriction on absentee and advance voting), procedural departures from ordinary legislative processes (particularly the exclusion of public participation), the lack of any neutral justification for the proposals, and the foreseeable disparate impact on Black voters and other voters of color, suggest the provisions embodied in Chapters 11, 12, and 15 of H.B. 531, individually and collectively raise serious concerns under the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. *Vill. of Arlington Heights v. Metro. Hous. Dev. Corp.*, 429 U.S. 252 (1977); 52 U.S.C. 10301. These same provisions in Chapters 11, 12, and 15 burden the right to vote without any legitimate state interest, which may also violate the First and Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.³⁰ Moreover, this Committee has not offered reasonable modifications necessary to ensure voters with disabilities will not be screened out from fully and equally participating in elections, which may violate Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. 42 U.S.C. §§ 12131.

* * *

We agree that our elections must be safe and secure. But H.B. 531 does nothing to enhance either goal. Instead, this bill is calculated in legislative process and substance to attempt to minimize the participation of voters of color and other voters in our political life following the historical participation in recent elections, especially for Black voters and other voters of colors. Its enactment would create unnecessary barriers, burdens, and disproportionately impact the voting rights of people of color, the elderly, people with disabilities, low-income people, rural residents, and students. It would also contravene popular mandate from recent elections and advocacy to expand voting rights in Georgia.

Our democracy requires free and open access to the sacred right to vote. As we prepare for elections this year and beyond, it is incumbent on this Committee and the

³⁰ See *Burdick v. Takushi*, 504 U.S. 428 (1992) (“A court considering a challenge to a state election law must weigh ‘the character and magnitude of the asserted injury to the rights protected by the First and Fourteenth Amendments that the plaintiffs seeks to vindicate’ against ‘the precise interest put forward by the State as justifications for the burden imposed by its rule,’ taking into consideration ‘the extent to which those interests make it necessary to burden the plaintiff’s rights.’”) (quoting *Anderson v. Celebrezze*, 460 U.S. 780, 789 (1983)).

Georgia Legislature to respond to the needs of its constituents. Those needs, as demonstrated through recent Georgia elections, are to preserve and expand, rather than restrict, access to the ballot box. That goal can only be accomplished by voting no on H.B. 531 and immediately withdrawing it.

Sincerely,

/s/ John S. Cusick

John S. Cusick, Litigation Fellow
Michael Pernick, Redistricting Counsel
Sam Spital, Director of Litigation
Leah C. Aden, Deputy Director of Litigation
NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc.
40 Rector Street, 5th Fl.
New York, NY 10006
(917) 858-2870
jcusick@naacpldf.org

/s/ Pichaya Poy Winichakul

Nancy G. Abudu, Deputy Legal Director
Pichaya Poy Winichakul, Staff Attorney
Voting Rights Practice Group
SPLC Action Fund
PO Box 1287
Decatur, GA 30031-1287
(470) 597-3010
nancy.abudu@splccenter.org
poy.winichakul@splcenter.org

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (“LDF”)

Since its founding in 1940, LDF has used litigation, policy advocacy, public education, and community organizing strategies to achieve racial justice and equity in education, economic justice, political participation, and criminal justice. Throughout its history, LDF has worked to enforce and promote laws and policies that increase access to the electoral process and prohibit voter discrimination, intimidation, and suppression. LDF has been fully separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (“NAACP”) since 1957, though LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.

SPLC Action Fund

SPLC Action Fund is a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements, and advance the human rights of all people. SPLC Action

Fund is the 501(c)4 affiliate organization to the Southern Poverty Law Center. For more information, visit www.splactionfund.org.