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MINNESOTA LEADS THE REGION IN VOTING RIGHTS PROTECTION WITH THE HISTORIC PASSAGE OF THE MINNESOTA STATE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

St Paul, Minnesota— Early this morning, the Minnesota Senate passed the [Minnesota Voting Rights Act \(MNVRA\)](#), which provides groundbreaking protection against racial discrimination in voting. This legislation makes Minnesota the first and only state to respond to the 8th Circuit's opinion which eliminated the private right of action under the federal VRA, and leading other states to follow. The MNVRA now serves as an insurance policy for Minnesotans, ensuring that every eligible voter has a fighting chance to defend their inalienable rights in a court of law.

"No matter what we look like or where we come from, we believe in a democracy that works for all of us. But from coast to coast, we see concerted efforts to disenfranchise Americans, especially those from marginalized communities, by shaving away voting protections and attempts to undermine our free and fair elections. With the passage of the MNVRA, we will once again have the tools necessary to protect Minnesotans across the state from voter suppression," **said Lilly Sasse, Campaign Director of We Choose Us.** "We are proud that Minnesota has taken a vital step towards building the inclusive, multiracial democracy we all deserve."

"As Black voters across America face the greatest assault on voting rights since Jim Crow, Minnesota is moving forward, not back, by passing the Minnesota Voting Rights Act," **said Janai Nelson, President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund (LDF).** "With this critical legislation, Minnesota takes a key step towards ensuring that every Minnesotan can cast a meaningful ballot free from discrimination and is poised to join a growing list of forward-looking states enacting State Voting Rights Acts to protect voters and advance inclusive, multiracial democracy. We at LDF extend our deepest gratitude to Representative Emma Greenman, Senate President Bobby Joe Champion, and Secretary of State Steve Simon for their tireless commitment to advancing the freedom to vote by championing the Minnesota Voting Rights Act."

In recent years, federal court rulings have reduced the protections guaranteed by the 1965 [Federal Voting Rights Act](#), limiting the ability of individuals or organizations to combat voter discrimination in court. Last November, the [U.S. 8th Circuit Court of Appeals](#) further bolstered these efforts by limiting challenges under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. This decision affects seven states, including Minnesota.

By codifying the protections into state law, the MNVRA will protect voting rights and access to the ballot box for every Minnesotan, especially in communities of color and other historically disenfranchised groups. The Minnesota Voting Rights Act's provisions include:

- **Prohibition Against Voter Suppression:** tackling voter suppression due to barriers that deny voting opportunities to voters of color.

- Prohibition Against Vote Dilution: tackling unfair districts or at-large elections that weaken or drown out the voices of black voters and other voters of color.
- Efficient and Clear Rules: adopting precise and efficient standards to make cases more predictable, efficient, and effective.
- Notice and Safe Harbor: requiring good-faith negotiation before lawsuits to fix voting discrimination as efficiently and inexpensively as possible for all parties.
- Enshrining the "Democracy Canon": instructing state judges to interpret election laws in a pro-voter way whenever reasonably possible.

[Six states](#) have already enacted similar voting rights acts, and it is time for Minnesota to join them in adopting robust protections against racial discrimination in voting. With the passage of the MNVRA, Minnesota stands as a bright example of democracy in action, prioritizing inclusivity, equality, and the protection of every Minnesotan's right to vote.

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