



March 21, 2019

TO: Members of the U.S. House
FROM: Chris Carson, President
RE: Support the Voting Rights Advancement Act, H.R. 4

The League of Women Voters strongly urges you to support and pass HR4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act, to modernize and repair the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The legislation responds directly and responsibly to the 2013 Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* and subsequent decisions by state and local jurisdictions to implement discriminatory practices connected to our elections. This legislation will update the coverage formula for preclearance to ensure it is based on contemporary acts of discrimination and provide mechanisms to prevent discrimination in voting nationwide.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA) outlawed racial discrimination in voting and established procedures to protect equal access to the vote for every American citizen. But in 2013, the Supreme Court overturned the key provision of the VRA that triggered careful review of voting changes in political jurisdictions with a history of racial discrimination in voting before they could take effect. Since that decision, politicians in states, counties, cities, and towns across the country have passed laws and adopted practices that discriminate against voters of color and language minorities -- making it harder for them to register and more difficult to vote and has shown the continued need for these protections.

The Voting Rights Advancement Act would accomplish three major goals:

- 1) It re-establishes preclearance coverage for states and localities with a pattern of discrimination in voting with a contemporary look back period.
- 2) It provides preclearance nationwide for political subdivisions with substantial minority populations for a limited number of voting changes based upon evidence of historic discriminatory, such as changes to election methods, changes to the qualifications to vote, and deviant polling location consolidation.
- 3) It provides for greater transparency and public notice for late-breaking voting changes just before an election, changes in polling resources, and use of demographic and electoral data.

For decades, ensuring that all eligible Americans have equal access to the ballot is a long-standing value supported by all sectors of our country. It is a value that has united our nation for more than 50 years and is why the League of Women Voters urges you to support the Voting Rights Advancement Act.