



August 23, 2021

TO: Members of the U.S. House

FROM: Virginia Kase Solomón, CEO

RE: Vote Yes for the *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act*, H.R. 4

The League of Women Voters strongly urges you to vote YES on HR4, the *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act* when it comes to the floor this week.

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. 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

The *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act*, HR4, will modernize and repair the *Voting Rights Act of 1965* by responding directly and responsibly to the 2013 Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, the 2021 decision in *Brnovich vs. DNC*, and subsequent efforts by state and local jurisdictions to implement discriminatory practices connected to our elections.

The League supports the following outcomes that HR4 will accomplish:

- 1) Establish new review and approval criteria for preventing racial discrimination in voting and require the US Department of Justice to perform an annual nationwide assessment to determine which state and local jurisdictions meet these criteria.
- 2) Mandate nationwide transparency by requiring all states and localities to provide public notice to all voters of voting changes prior to elections.
- 3) Allow voters of color to challenge voting changes that worsen their position and restore the ability of voters to challenge racial discrimination in court, while also pausing those discriminatory voting changes during the judicial review process.

It is an unfortunate fact that discrimination in voting against racial, ethnic, and language minorities continues in America. This should be unacceptable in the greatest democracy in the world. The League of Women Voters urges you to vote YES on HR4, the *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act*.