



February 14, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20510  
Sent via electronic mail

RE: State of the Union Address

Dear President Biden,

As you make the final preparations for the State of the Union, the League of Women Voters of the United States would like to offer some insight into what we hope to hear during your speech. This national address is a powerful opportunity to elevate the issues that are most pressing in our democracy. Thus, we encourage you to use your platform on March 7 to do the following:

**Promote Restoration of *The Voting Rights Act***

The *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act* is the most pressing piece of legislation we can pass to prevent discrimination and restore the *Voting Rights Act of 1965* (VRA). This legislation will ensure that those that seek to prevent voters of color, voters with language access needs, and voters with disabilities from casting their ballots are not allowed to infringe upon the right to vote.

Since the Supreme Court's *Shelby County v. Holder* decision rolled back key provisions of the *Voting Rights Act* in 2013, we have seen voting become more challenging, especially for women and communities of color. In recent elections, voters have faced a variety of obstacles, from reduced polling locations and stringent voter identification requirements to the illegal removal of registered voters from the rolls and restrictions that limit voters' options when it comes to how they cast their ballot. This election year, we cannot risk further erosion of the freedom to vote and equality of opportunity for all eligible voters to cast their ballots.

The League requests that you continue to direct Congress to work together to pass the *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act* and the *Freedom to Vote Act*, which together will ensure that voters are able to cast their ballots free of discriminatory or administrative barriers.



### **Underscore the Value of Our Democracy**

In this election year, it is more important than ever to rally the American people around the importance of participating in our democracy. Our democracy — a government of, by, and for the people — makes this nation special, and our participation in it is integral to our freedom.

Democratic elections affect every area of our lives, including health care, jobs, and more. When we elect our leaders, we choose the people who will make decisions that shape the direction of our country and communities. By driving the conversation around democracy and its relevance to our everyday lives, we can strengthen our electoral system and get more people involved.

As the US heads into yet another historic presidential election cycle, it is vital that we work together to ensure broad participation in our electoral system. For our democracy to be truly representative, we must all be engaged. The State of the Union address is the ideal platform to remind Americans of the importance of using their votes to ensure their voices will be heard when they cast their ballots.

### **Advocate for Election Protections**

As you know, 2024 is a major election year, and millions of Americans will cast their ballots for the next cycle of leaders at all levels of government. Protecting our elections requires constant diligence, including equipping election workers with the resources necessary to facilitate secure elections with the Election Assistance Commission, expanding voter registration and education within all government agencies, reforming money in politics, and combating mis- and dis-information.

We commend your administration's work to foster greater participation in our elections- including your voting access Executive Order. We encourage continued accountability of federal agencies in implementing the Executive Order so that voters have expanded access to register to vote. Throughout this pivotal election year, it is incredibly important that we prioritize the integrity of our electoral process and guarantee that every citizen's voice is heard. Prioritizing a secure, transparent, and effective election process supports voter turnout and ensures that the American people retain trust in our election systems.

### **Elevate the Equal Rights Amendment**

The *Equal Rights Amendment* (ERA) was first introduced in Congress 100 years ago and has met all ratification requirements. Yet today, the ERA still isn't included in the US Constitution.

Despite the significant progress made towards equality over the years, women and others still face systematic sex discrimination in the form of unequal pay, workplace harassment, pregnancy discrimination, domestic violence, and limited access to comprehensive health care. The ERA would address the root cause of sex and gender inequality by constitutionally protecting the equality of rights under law regardless of sex. Publication of the ERA would prevent the rollback of equal rights, provide a vital tool to the judicial branch to combat discrimination, and pave the way for additional legislative progress.



We appreciate that for the past three years on Women's Equality Day, you have voiced your support for the ERA. We implore you to take continued action. In addition to urging Congress to act to recognize ratification of the ERA, the League requests that you support the desire of more than 80% of the population and send guidance to the US Archivist to publish the *Equal Rights Amendment*.

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We hope to continue to build our partnership as we move our democracy forward in the next year and beyond. Please do not hesitate to contact our staff via Jessica Jones Capparell, Director of Government Affairs, at [JJones@lww.org](mailto:JJones@lww.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sania Choudhary Irwin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sania Irwin, President  
League of Women Voters of the United States