



Statement for the League of Women Voters of the United States

US Senate

Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution

Enforcing Callais: Implementing the Supreme Court's Command Against Racial Gerrymandering

May 26, 2026

The League of Women Voters of the United States (“the League”) appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement to the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution following the hearing “Enforcing Callais: Implementing the Supreme Court’s Command Against Racial Gerrymandering.”

The League is a 106-year-old nonpartisan organization with more than one million members and supporters in every state and the District of Columbia across more than 800 local and state Leagues. Through advocacy, education, litigation, and organizing, we work to empower voters and defend democracy. We base our work on policy positions developed from multi-year studies and derived through consensus among League membership, to ensure our advocacy reflects best practices and a nationwide perspective.

In the United States, the right to vote is a core promise of our democracy, and that promise depends on both access to the ballot and fair representation once ballots are cast. In a democratic government, every person is considered equal and is empowered to both participate in their government and speak on the issues that impact their daily lives. A representative system of government depends on every eligible voter having a meaningful opportunity to participate and for that that participation to be reflected fairly in our democratic institutions.

Considering the Supreme Court’s recent 6-3 decision in *Louisiana v. Callais*, the League urges Congress to restore and strengthen the protections of the VRA. The decision in *Callais* compounds the damage caused by earlier decisions in *Shelby County v. Holder* and *Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee*, each of which narrowed critical safeguards against voting discrimination. In the years since *Shelby County*, jurisdictions across the country have enacted discriminatory voting policies, and voters have encountered a range of unnecessary obstacles, including polling place closures, restrictive identification requirements, unlawful voter roll purges, and limitations on the methods by which eligible voters may cast their ballots.

Among the most significant current threats to equal access to the ballot are documentary proof of citizenship (DPOC) requirements introduced in numerous states and at the federal level and enacted in several state and local jurisdictions. These proposals have proliferated as federal voting rights protections have been weakened. DPOC requirements conflict with the *National Voter Registration Act*, and courts have repeatedly rejected such mandates, including in *Arizona v. Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc.*, *Fish v. Kobach*, *League of Women Voters v. Newby*, and *Kobach v. Election Assistance Commission*. In each instance, courts found insufficient justification for imposing documentary proof of citizenship requirements on the federal voter registration form.



Such requirements are unnecessary and would predictably disenfranchise eligible voters. Voters in every state already must affirm or verify their citizenship status when registering, and state election officials have not produced evidence of widespread noncitizen registration or voting that would justify imposing additional documentary barriers. Congress should reject proposals that would burden eligible voters without advancing election security.

Accordingly, the League urges Congress to respond to the Court's decision in *Callais* and to the broader erosion of federal voting rights protections by enacting legislation that ensures voters can register and cast their ballots free from discriminatory or unnecessary administrative barriers. Over the past decade, the *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act* has been the principal legislative vehicle for modernizing and restoring the VRA. Now that further damage has been done to the VRA through the *Callais* decision, the VRAA must be rewritten to reinstate Section 2 of the VRA, in addition to repairing sections 4 and 5 following the *Shelby County* and *Brnovich* decisions.

The implications of the Court's decision in *Louisiana v. Callais* extend well beyond a single state and go to the core of whether Section 2 remains an effective safeguard against racial vote dilution in redistricting. For decades, Section 2 has provided voters and courts with a vital framework for challenging district maps that crack communities of color across multiple districts or pack them into a limited number of districts, diminishing their electoral influence. Those protections have helped ensure that redistricting more accurately reflects communities and preserves a fair opportunity for voters of color to elect candidates of their choice. By limiting the availability of that protection, the Court has made it substantially more difficult to challenge discriminatory maps and has increased the risk that exclusionary districting practices will be defended as ordinary politics. In practical terms, the decision weakens one of the federal government's most important tools for protecting fair representation.

Recent developments across the South underscore how quickly the consequences of *Callais* are reshaping representation on the ground. In Alabama, after the Supreme Court sent the case back for reconsideration, state officials sought to replace the current court-ordered map with a 2023 plan containing only one majority-Black district, but a three-judge federal panel recently blocked that effort and required the state to continue using the map with two Black opportunity districts for the 2026 cycle.¹ In Louisiana, the Court's April 2026 decision invalidating the state's 2024 map with a second majority-Black congressional district immediately forced renewed map-drawing and election-calendar changes ahead of the next congressional contests.² In Florida, the state Supreme Court's 2025 decision upholding the dismantling of the former North Florida Black-performing district was followed by a new 2026 mid-decade congressional map now being challenged as an additional partisan gerrymander under the state constitution.³ And in South Carolina, legislators convened in late May to consider yet another congressional remap that could target the state's lone Democratic and heavily Black district.⁴ Together, these examples show that without strong federal protections, redistricting fights in the South will continue to test whether Black voters and other historically marginalized communities can maintain an equal and effective voice in our democracy.

For that reason, the League urges Congress to act. The erosion of the VRA through *Shelby County*, *Brnovich*, and now *Callais* has left voters with fewer meaningful protections against both barriers to ballot access and the dilution of their voting strength. Congress has repeatedly recognized, on a bipartisan

¹ <https://www.cnbc.com/2026/05/26/alabama-redistricting-congress-black-votes-midterm-elections.html>

² <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/supreme-court-louisiana-redistricting-ruling-take-effect-immediately-alito-jackson/>

³ <https://www.npr.org/2026/04/29/nx-s1-5804703/florida-redistricting-voting-map-republicans-house-seats>

⁴ <https://www.southcarolinapublicradio.org/sc-news/2026-05-26/sc-senators-return-to-redistricting-decision-as-early-voting-begins>



basis, that equal participation in our democracy depends not only on the formal ability to cast a ballot, but also on whether district lines are drawn in ways that allow communities to be heard. Congress should therefore restore a strong Section 2, make clear that remedies for racial vote dilution remain lawful and necessary, and preserve the ability of voters and civil rights organizations to challenge discriminatory maps.

The League's *People Powered Fair Maps* initiative illustrates what a constructive redistricting framework can look like in practice. Through this national redistricting program, the League advances fair, transparent, community-centered map-drawing processes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and works to combat both partisan and racial gerrymandering through advocacy, education, organizing, litigation, and defensive action. This effort reflects a core democratic principle: communities should have a meaningful opportunity to participate in the drawing of the districts that will shape their representation for the next decade. A durable federal response to the erosion of voting rights protections should support redistricting processes that are transparent, accountable to the public, and responsive to communities rather than to political self-interest.

For millions of Americans, it is harder than it should be to register to vote, cast a ballot, and have their voices heard equally. That reality is inconsistent with the promise of American democracy. Protecting the freedom to vote and ensuring fair representation are not partisan objectives; they are constitutional and democratic imperatives. The League stands ready to work with the Committee and its members to strengthen the protections of the *Voting Rights Act* and to safeguard the rights of all voters.

The League remains committed to ending discrimination in voting and to advancing policy solutions that protect all voters. For follow up, please contact Jessica Jones Capparell, Director of Government Affairs for the League of Women Voters of the US, at jjones@lwv.org or Kristen Kern, Federal Policy and Advocacy Manager for the League of Women Voters of the US, at kkern@lwv.org.