



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE UNITED STATES

President
Elisabeth MacNamara
Atlanta, Georgia

September 19, 2013

To: Members of the U.S. Senate

Vice Presidents
Janis McMillen
Overland Park, Kansas

From: Elisabeth MacNamara, President

Re: Repair and Restore the Voting Rights Act

Mary T. Klenz
Charlotte, North Carolina

The League of Women Voters believes that Congress must act to repair and restore the Voting Rights Act to its full effectiveness following the recent Supreme Court decision in *Shelby v. Holder*. This decision erased fundamental protections against racial discrimination in voting that have been critical in protecting our democracy. The League was very disappointed in the *Shelby* decision and we believe that Congress needs to move swiftly to overcome this decision and repair and restore the full effectiveness of the Voting Rights Act.

Secretary-Treasurer
Patricia L. Donath
Lansing, Michigan

Directors
Peggy Appller
Charleston, South Carolina

The League has long supported the Voting Rights Act (VRA). As an organization whose mission encourages informed and active participation in government, we believe that we need to keep our elections free, fair and accessible. League members worked closely with members of Congress to reauthorize the VRA in 1982 and as recently as 2006. We believe that the Voting Rights Act and its enforcement over the past four decades is largely responsible for the progress we have made eliminating discrimination in voting.

Carolyn V. Brown
Douglas, Alaska

Toni E. Larson
Denver, Colorado

Therefore, we are concerned that the *Shelby* decision weakened the Voting Rights Act as a mechanism to fight discrimination by striking down Section 4, which determines the states and jurisdictions that must secure federal approval before changing election laws. The League believes that the Supreme Court decision is ill founded. While we have made progress in voting rights, the fact that the Department of Justice blocked over 700 voting changes they found to be discriminatory from 1982 through the VRA's 2006 reauthorization speaks for itself.

Karen Nicholson
Midland, Texas

Anne B. Schink
South Portland, Maine

The League believes that we need the VRA to combat these 'second-generation barriers' and the pernicious discrimination that is less visible than what occurred decades ago but no less harmful to the right to vote. We ask you to fix this issue and restore the Voting Rights Act to its full effectiveness.

Norman Turrill
Portland, Oregon

Linda P. Wassenich
Dallas, Texas

We are encouraged that both chambers of Congress have already held hearings on the Voting Rights Act and that legislators from both sides of the aisle recognized that discrimination in our elections remains a problem. The Voting Rights Act is a critical component to stopping this discrimination.

Susan Morris Wilson
Redding, California

The League will continue to pursue all avenues to fight for voters' rights, but we need strong action by Congress now to repair and restore the Voting Rights Act protections that have helped us prevent racial and language discrimination in our elections for decades. Solutions for voters are required on an issue as fundamental as the voting rights of all Americans.

Executive Director
Nancy E. Tate

Thank you for your leadership and we ask you to act quickly to repair and restore the Voting Rights Act to ensure our elections are free, fair and accessible to all citizens.