



April 21, 2022

The Honorable Ned Lamont
 Governor of Connecticut
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, CT 06106

The Honorable Martin Looney
 President Pro Tempore, Connecticut Senate
 Legislative Office Building, Room 3300
 Hartford, CT 06106

The Honorable Matt Ritter
 Speaker, Connecticut House of Representatives
 Legislative Office Building, Room 4106
 Hartford, CT 06106

**RE: SUPPORT FOR “AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTIONS
 & STATE VOTING RIGHTS” (SB 471)**

Dear Governor Lamont, Senate President Looney, and Speaker Ritter:

We write to express our strong support for SB 471, “An Act Concerning Elections and State Voting Rights.” This landmark legislation would root out discrimination against voters of color in

Connecticut and immediately make the Nutmeg State a national leader on protecting the right to vote. For these reasons, SB 471 is a top voting rights priority for Connecticut of the undersigned civil and voting rights organizations.

As Black and brown voters across the country face the greatest assault on their rights since Jim Crow, we need Connecticut to stand up for voting rights.

Despite Connecticut's progressive reputation, there are still discriminatory barriers to equal participation in our democracy for voters of color and people whose first language is not English, particularly at the local level. In fact, Connecticut has some of the most restrictive voting laws in the nation with Black and Latino voters facing limited access to absentee voting, no early voting, and longer voting lines.

SB 471 will set a new standard for protecting the right to vote by:

- Launching a “preclearance” program that requires local governments with records of discrimination to prove that proposed voting changes will not harm voters of color before they can go into effect.
- Providing new legal tools to fight discriminatory voting provisions in court.
- Expanding language assistance for voters with limited English proficiency.
- Creating strong protections against voter intimidation, deception, or obstruction.
- Establishing a central hub for election data and demographic information that will empower officials and community members to ensure accessible elections.

SB 471 builds upon successful laws already passed in California, Washington, Oregon, and Virginia. New York is currently considering legislation similar to SB 471. The first bill passed will immediately become the most comprehensive state-level voting rights act in the country.

Now is Connecticut's time to lead. We urge you to pass and sign into law SB 471, and we stand ready to work with you to secure this victory for all Connecticut voters.

Sincerely,

4Cs - SEIU Local 1973
ACLU of Connecticut
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. - Connecticut Chapters
Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders
Bridgeport Generation Now Votes
Campaign Legal Center

Common Cause in Connecticut
Communications Workers of America Local 1298
CSEA SEIU Local 2001
CT AFL-CIO
CT Citizen Action Group
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
Generation Change CT
Greater New Haven NAACP
Hispanic Federation Connecticut State Office
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
League of Women Voters of Connecticut
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
National Association of Social Workers Connecticut Chapter
New Haven Peoples Center
New Haven Votes Coalition
Norwalk Women Who Vote
Unrig Bridgeport Coalition
UU the Vote CTR
Service Employees International Union Connecticut State Council
St. Monica's Episcopal Church, Hartford
Voter Choice Connecticut
Western Area Labor Federation