

Holding Power Accountable

Common Cause Urges "Yes" Vote to Begin Debate on the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, S 4; Will Score Vote in Our Next Democracy Scorecard

November 2, 2021

Dear Senator:

All Americans, regardless of their age, zip code, or skin color, deserve to have their voices heard. On behalf of Common Cause's more than 1.5 million supporters, we strongly urge you to vote "yes" on cloture for the motion to proceed to the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, S. 4, when it is expected to be voted on by the Senate later this week. **Common Cause will key-vote this legislation in our next ["Democracy Scorecard,"](#)** which we share with our supporters in each state as well as with the press.

The Voting Rights Act, which has been extended and amended five times with strong bipartisan congressional support and the signatures of five Republican presidents, is landmark legislation to strengthen our democracy to protect it from continued racial discrimination in voting. The Supreme Court's enormously damaging 5-4 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* gutted key parts of the Voting Rights Act in 2013, including the requirement that jurisdictions with a history of racial discrimination in voting preclear changes to their voting procedures with the Department of Justice or a federal court. And this summer's *Brnovich v. DNC* decision further weakened another pillar of the Voting Rights Act that will make it more difficult to challenge racially discriminatory voting laws.

But the Court clearly left open the responsibility of Congress to update and modernize the Voting Rights Act.

This year, many states and localities have worked to suppress votes and silence Americans, especially Black and Brown Americans. At least 19 states have passed 33 bills that would make it harder to vote this year. Tactics include voter purges, strict voter ID, signature mismatch requirements, poll closures, intimidation, disinformation, and numerous other ways to try to suppress eligible voters, who are frequently from communities of color.

We must modernize the Voting Rights Act to stop these voter suppression tactics and ensure that the voices of all American voters can be heard. The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act would ensure that the Voting Rights Act reflects current conditions of racial discrimination in voting. It is based on a robust record of hearings and evidence-gathering by the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Voter suppression is ultimately about power and who has a voice in our democracy. The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, along with the Freedom to Vote Act, would restore power back to voters and ensure that the voices of all eligible voters can be heard in our democracy. Ten current Senate Republicans voted for the Voting Rights Act reauthorization when it passed the Senate 98-0 in 2006. If there are not 10 Senate Republicans who will vote to protect our freedom to vote, then Senate Democrats must do whatever it takes to pass these critically important bills.

Sincerely,



Karen Hobert Flynn
President
Common Cause