

June 25, 2014

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**Re: Jewish Organizations Support the Voting Rights Amendment Act**

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Grassley:

As organizations that collectively represent tens of millions of diverse people of faith across the United States, we write to share our strong support for the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014 (S.1945) and urge its swift passage by both chambers of Congress.

Many people of faith proudly fought for the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965, which took historic steps to prohibit the discriminatory voting practices that denied and abridged the rights of so many in our communities. The Supreme Court's 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which stripped critical protections for voters in striking down a key provision of the VRA, reminds us that our work is far from complete.

The teachings of our respective faiths may diverge on issues of theology and practice, but all speak clearly of the imperative to pursue justice and treat each and every human being with dignity and respect. We are united in standing up for those most at risk of having their voices silenced at the ballot box. We are inspired to do what we can to protect the right of each individual to play a role in shaping the future of our cities, towns, states and nation. What is at stake in this fight is the very nature of our society, whether we can truly call ourselves a democracy in which each citizen can cast a vote to choose our leaders and shape the direction of our country.

Chief Justice Roberts called upon Congress to update the Voting Rights Act. Every day that passes without Congressional action brings new voting procedures unreported at best and outright discriminatory at worst. This bill is not perfect. We remain concerned that voter ID laws are treated differently from other potentially discriminatory policies and that a “known practices” formula, which would provide recourse against some of the most common discriminatory practices, is not included. Yet, we are united in the belief that now is the time to build on the critical tools in this legislation and stop discriminatory voting practices wherever they occur.

Voting rights legislation has long been—and continues to be—a shining example of bipartisan unity. We urge you to support the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014 (S.1945) and see that its modern, commonsense provisions are swiftly enacted. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Am Kolel Jewish Renewal Community of Greater Washington  
Ameinu  
American Baptist Churches U.S.A.  
American Baptist Home Mission Societies  
American Friends Service Committee  
American Jewish Committee  
Amir  
Anti-Defamation League  
AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps  
B'nai B'rith International  
Bend the Arc: A Jewish Partnership for Justice  
Bernardine Franciscan Sisters, Reading, PA  
Capuchin Franciscans of the Province of St. Mary (CT, ME, NH, NY, VT)  
Community of Christ  
Conference of National Black Churches (CNBC)  
Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, New York, NY  
Crossroad Bible Institute  
Disciples Center for Public Witness (Disciples of Christ)  
Disciples Home Missions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Disciples Justice Action Network  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Faith in Public Life  
Franciscan Action Network  
Franciscan Friars, TOR, Province of the Immaculate Conception  
Franciscans for Justice  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Global Faith and Justice Project, Santa Fe, NM  
Global Justice Institute  
Hindu American Foundation  
Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace  
International Council of Community Churches  
Islamic Society of North America  
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA)  
Jewish Community Action  
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Jewish Council on Urban Affairs  
Jewish Labor Committee  
Jewish Reconstructionist Communities  
Jewish Women International  
Jews for Racial and Economic Justice  
Jews United for Justice  
Keshet  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious  
Leadership Team of the Felician Sisters of North America

Leadership Team, Sisters of St. Francis of Tiffin, OH  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office  
Metropolitan Community Churches  
More Light Presbyterians  
National Council of Churches, U.S.A.  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council of Jewish Women, Austin Section  
National Council of Jewish Women, Maine Section  
National Council of Jewish Women, Peninsula Section  
National Council of Jewish Women, Seattle Section  
National Council of Jewish Women, Texas State Policy Advocacy Network  
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Institute for Welcoming Resources  
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
Pax Christi USA  
PICO National Network  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.  
Province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order, Detroit, MI  
Rabbinical Assembly  
Reconciliation Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Reconciling Ministries Network  
ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation  
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College  
Religious Institute  
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)  
Sikh Council on Religion and Education (SCORE)  
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, PA  
Sisters of St. Francis, Sylvania, OH  
Sojourners  
Surat Initiative  
The Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists  
The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries  
The Solomon Project  
The Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
United Methodist Church-General Board of Church and Society  
UNITED SIKHS  
Uri L'tzedek  
Valley Interfaith Council  
Wheaton Franciscans, Wheaton, IL  
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER)