

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 Jewish organizations that collectively represent millions of American Jews, 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.

For the Jewish community, the fight for voting rights is deeply personal. We proudly joined African Americans and many others who marched and fought for the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965, which took monumental steps to prohibit discriminatory voting practices that denied and abridged the rights of so many in our communities.

We are inspired not only by the Jewish leaders of our time, but by our sages of old. Jewish tradition teaches that “a ruler is not to be appointed unless the community is first consulted” (Babylonian Talmud, *B'rachot* 55a). In our nation, that means the full diversity of our citizenry must have the unabridged right to choose their leaders at the ballot box.

The Supreme Court's recent decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which struck down a key provision of the VRA and stripped critical protections for voters, reminds us that our work is far from done. Chief Justice Roberts called upon Congress to develop a new formula. Every day that passes without this new formula new voting procedures are proposed and implemented. At best, they are unreported and unscrutinized; at worst they are outright discriminatory.

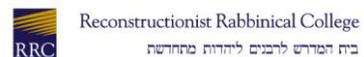
This bill is not perfect. We remain concerned that voter ID laws are treated differently from other potentially discriminatory policies and that a “known practices” formula, which would provide recourse against some of the most common discriminatory practices, is not included. Yet, we firmly believe that now is the time to build on the critical tools in this legislation by working together to strengthen the overall bill 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,

Ameinu
 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
 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
 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
 Rabbinical Assembly
 Reconstructionist Rabbinical College
 The Solomon Project
 The Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring
 Union for Reform Judaism
 Uri L'tzedek

BEND THE ARC
 a jewish partnership
for justice



National Council of Jewish Women

