



June 25, 2014

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

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

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Grassley:

On behalf of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the oldest national organization advocating for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people and their families, we strongly support the passage of the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014 (S. 1945). This bipartisan legislation offers an effective approach in response to the Supreme Court's decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which struck down a key provision of the Voting Rights Act that for decades had protected voters from discrimination. LGBTQ people come from every race, economic class, and faith background – voting discrimination of any kind stymies the voices of LGBTQ people and prevents the LGBTQ community from being accurately represented in the political process.

Discriminatory voting practices continue to be a pervasive issue throughout the United States, and we need structures in place to help combat and prevent voting discrimination. Since the *Shelby* decision, state and local governments have implemented the types of voting changes that have previously been ruled discriminatory by the U.S. Department of Justice, such as changes to voting district boundary lines targeting minorities and moving polling places to locations that present substantial barriers to low-income voters.

The voting protections currently in place are no longer adequate in light of the Supreme Court's *Shelby* decision, gutting a key provision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Voting discrimination is a bipartisan issue that negatively impacts both parties and is a threat to our democracy. The Voting Rights Amendment Act is a modern, flexible, nationwide approach to protecting voters, which embodies the spirit and letter of the Court's decision. This legislation does not just provide a reactionary device to discrimination; it puts in place protections that will help prevent future discriminatory practices.

The time is now to pass this crucial legislation. We must move the Voting Rights Amendment Act forward in order to protect the votes and voices of all Americans. Every day that passes without protections causes further harm to our voters.

We look forward to working with you on this critical legislation. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Stacey Long, Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs, at [slong@thetaskforce.org](mailto:slong@thetaskforce.org) or 202-639-6307.

Sincerely,

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

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