

**Coalition of Labor Union Women
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PROTECT VOTING RIGHTS

The Voting Rights Act (VRA) bans racial discrimination in voting practices by the federal government as well as by state and local governments. Passed in 1965 after a century of deliberate and violent denial of the vote to African-Americans in the South and Latinos in the Southwest — as well as many years of entrenched electoral systems that shut out citizens with limited fluency in English — the VRA is often held up as the most effective civil rights law ever enacted. Most recently it has been instrumental in assuring Asian American voters are able to run for office and cast their votes without intimidation.

Disturbing changes in voting districts, registration deadlines and early voting rules as well as efforts to require voter identification, point to enforcement difficulties in elections to come. Attempts to pass or actual passage of legislation that restricts early voting (thereby limiting the ability of workers to cast their ballots) or that requires voters to show a photo ID at the polls (impacting voters who are senior citizens and/or unable to afford the cost of photo IDs) are compromising the rights of America's voters. All these changes are suggested in an effort to prevent voter fraud which occurs in less than 1% of the elections.

States better serve their constituents when they protect the fundamental, constitutionally sanctioned rights of tens of millions of voters, rather than discourage voting in order to forestall a handful of fraud allegations each year.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) calls upon the US Department of Justice to enforce the recently reauthorized Voting Rights Acts so that they will:

- Monitor proposed changes in procedures and places of voting for all state and local governments with a history of significant discrimination, determining that such changes are not discriminatory;
- Protect communities of citizens with limited English proficiency so they have equal access to the electoral process, and provide oral and written language assistance to language minorities who need help navigating complicated rules and ballot procedures;
- Continue to send Election Day observers to monitor polling places in order to stop any intimidation of voters and to assure accurate counting of ballots in areas with a history of discrimination.

CLUW will vigorously oppose the imposition of voter identification laws that effectively prevent at least 11% of senior and low income citizens from exercising their right to cast a ballot, and work to roll back legislation that imposes these burdens. CLUW also renounces efforts underway to shorten or abolish the early voting period and efforts to reduce state pre-election registration periods and same-day registration for voters.

CLUW urges its members to work on forthcoming elections to increase voter registration, provide poll information, serve as election officers and promote the principles of free and democratic elections to their communities.