



NATIONAL LGBTQ TASK FORCE
ACTION FUND

THE VOTING RIGHTS TOOLKIT

for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Advocates

September 2015

be you.

The Voting Rights Toolkit for LGBTQ Advocates

About the Task Force

The National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund works to secure full freedom, justice and equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people. For over 40 years, we have been at the forefront of the social justice movement by training thousands of organizers and advocating for change at the federal, state, and local level.

The Task Force devotes its work to striking a balance between sustained local work, which often focuses on statewide campaigns around marriage equality and non-discrimination efforts, and broader work, which includes influencing federal policy directions and working closely with federal agency employees to ensure equitable and timely implementation of policies that affect LGBTQ people. The impact of this work involves ensuring that grassroots efforts at the local and state levels prioritize building racially and economically diverse staff, boards, and volunteer teams that specifically engage people of color, transgender people, people of faith, and LGBTQ allies in these efforts. As one of its key policy priorities, the Task Force is committed to preserving, restoring, and advancing voting rights for all.

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SECTION I: A Background and Landscape of Voting Rights

Voting Rights History Timeline	8
A Summary of the Current Voting Rights Landscape	10
An Overview of Restrictive Voting Practices	11
A Discussion of Voting Rights as an LGBTQ Issue	15

SECTION II: Tools for Voting Advocates

Action Opportunities	20
Legislative Advocacy	20
Community Organizing	21
Advocacy Tools	
LGBTQ Voting Rights Information	23
Voting Rights Fact Sheet	23
Sample Talking Points	25
Sample Tweets	27
Voting Rights Advancement Act Tools	28
VRAA Fact Sheet	28
Sample Press Release	29
Sample Op-Ed	30
Voter Assistance Tools	31
Voter Checklist	31
Voter Assistance Guides	33
Voting Rights Reference Guides	37
Additional Voting Rights Resources	37

Welcome Letter

Dear LGBTQ and Voting Rights Advocates,

It's my privilege to join with the National LGBTQ Task Force in sharing this newly designed Voting Rights Toolkit for LGBTQ advocates. This toolkit is intended to be a vital asset for LGBTQ advocates in advancing voting rights as well as for those voting rights advocates seeking to engage with LGBTQ voters. Here you'll find a trove of useful information, including background on the issue, a summary of the current political landscape around voting rights, and a number of practical advocacy resources.

Though we've achieved important gains for the LGBTQ community—including marriage equality, executive orders to protect LGBTQ federal contractors and transgender federal workers, and a Department of Justice interpretation of trans discrimination as sex discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act—we know that many battles that deeply touch the lives of LGBTQ people are still ongoing. Voting rights, in particular, have been and remain one such battleground. In recent years, we have seen a resurgence of voter suppression efforts, especially following the 2013 Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which severely undermined the protections of the Voting Rights Act. Ever resilient, voting rights advocates across the nation—including those of the LGBTQ community—have intensified their efforts to ensure a free and fair democracy for all.

The right to vote—the right to register to vote, to cast a vote, and to have that vote counted—is the most foundational right in our democracy. The Task Force recognizes the crucial relationship between voting rights and its mission of full freedom, justice, and equality for all LGBTQ people, particularly when LGBTQ rights have been subject to ballot initiatives around the country. This toolkit adds a substantive body of knowledge to voting rights advocacy work and contains tools to support advocates in supporting eligible LGBTQ people through the registration and voting processes so their votes can be counted. By providing LGBTQ-specific information and issue-specific resources, it enables advocates to access the tools they will need.

Fifty years after Bloody Sunday and the passage of the Voting Rights Act, we should not have to demand the right to vote again. Our founders proclaimed that our rights were inalienable. Those who came before us in the struggle for civil and human rights worked to make real those rights.

But with the future of voting rights at stake today, we must do everything we can to ensure that all eligible voters, including LGBTQ voters, have their voices heard. Because if you don't vote, you don't count—and with your help, we can once again become the democracy we aspire to be.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson
President and CEO

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

Foreword

The U.S. is often regarded as the world's leading democracy and the right to vote is the foundational right that enables U.S. citizens to engage with and shape that democracy. Voting is a major responsibility provided by U.S. citizenship; it is a civic duty and is central to the tenant of equality itself. Indeed, voting is regarded as the "most powerful nonviolent tool we have in democratic society to effect change,"¹ at all levels of government. But voting rights—meaning who has the right to register to vote, to cast a vote, and to have their vote counted—are and have long been subject to a long-standing political battle in U.S.

The protections in place, however minimal, have been hard won. Over the course of U.S. history, unequal burden has been placed on immigrants of color, non-voluntary migrants, and indigenous people to earn U.S. citizenship and obtain access to the polls. The right to vote has been called into question for different demographic characteristics, such as race, language, gender, age, ability, and prior criminal record. In each case, the minority community fought for the right to vote, eventually resulting in legal protections to vote for members of the category in question. But regardless of the policy in place, different varieties of voter suppression tactics emerged in response: from requirements such as land ownership, literacy tests, and poll taxes to redistricting, discriminatory registration requirements, and language barriers. And with each new suppression tactic, discrimination continued.

In the 1960's—nearly 200 years after the constitution was ratified, and nearly 100 years after slaves were granted citizenship—the Civil Rights Movement brought renewed national attention to the discrimination faced by African Americans, and voting rights were central to the battle. In response, Congress passed a landmark piece of legislation—the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA)—that sought to safeguard the right of racial and ethnic minorities to vote by removing literacy requirements and ensuring oversight of changes to voting laws in states with a history of voter discrimination.² Discrimination continued to exist, but federal oversight offered a measure of security. In the decades after the Act was passed, it has been reauthorized four times with strong bipartisan majorities in Congress, and the last reauthorization was signed by President George W. Bush.

Less than 50 years later, in the 2013 *Shelby County v. Holder* Supreme Court decision, a key provision of the VRA was struck down, stripping federal oversight protections from states and counties with a history of voter discrimination. In the decision, the Court did not find that voting rights protections were unnecessary or that voter discrimination does not exist; rather, it held that Congress must modernize the implementation of voter protections.

As such we are at another critical moment in our history. The last five years have seen an animated resurgence of voter suppression tactics, limiting the right to vote for a large range of minority groups, particularly people of color and people living in poverty. Despite clear evidence of continuing voting discrimination, key leaders in Congress insist that discrimination is a thing of the past while refusing to hold hearings to on the issue. As such, nonprofits and research organizations bear witness to the discrimination against various minority populations,³ document recent voting rights violations at the state and local level,⁴ and publish toolkits such as this to advocate for voting rights.

The Task Force has produced this toolkit in an effort to aid lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) advocates in voter engagement efforts, and to educate LGBTQ advocates and voting rights allies on the ways voting rights discrimination impacts LGBTQ voters. The toolkit is intended to provide an initial LGBTQ overlay of the voting rights conversation, and is not intended to be an exhaustive resource.

This advocacy tool will give a short background on voting rights, some present context, and outline some of the prevalent voter suppression tactics in use. It offers action opportunities for advocates, including a voter checklist, support guide, and a list of useful resources. This toolkit offers a summary of useful information for LGBTQ voter registration, being an informed poll worker, and the web links to report discriminatory conduct, practices, or actions. The toolkit also encourages voters to contact their legislators in support of the Voting Rights Advancement Act (S. 1659/HR. 2867), legislation introduced in June 2015 to restore the Voting Rights Act.

SECTION I

A Background and Landscape of Voting Rights

- Voting Rights History Timeline
- Summary of the Current Voting Rights Landscape
- Overview of Restrictive Voting Practices
- Discussion of Voting Rights as an LGBTQ Issue

Voting Rights History Timeline

The Constitution, as originally adopted, left voting qualifications up to the states.⁵ Even though States continue to retain jurisdiction over regulating voting rights, over time, there have been a number of court rulings, constitutional amendments, and federal laws enacted that have impacted voting access and—as voting rights are synonymous with citizenship—citizenship access, particularly for immigrants of color, non-voluntary migrants, and indigenous people.

Below is a timeline of rulings, amendments, and laws related to voting access and citizenship access:⁶

1787	U.S. Constitution is adopted; free white men 21 or older who own property can vote
1790	Naturalization Law—free white immigrants can become naturalized citizens; white men who own land can vote
1848	Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo—extends U.S. citizenship to Mexican people living in areas conquered by the U.S.; voting language requirements are enacted; violence and intimidation used to restrict voting access
1856	Property ownership is no longer required to vote; all white men with U.S. citizenship can vote
1865	13th Amendment abolishes slavery
1868	14th Amendment—Former slaves are granted citizenship, but voting rights are subject to states discretion; only men can vote
1870	15th Amendment—Federal and State governments prohibited from denying right to vote based on race. But after the Reconstruction era, voting taxes and literacy tests are enacted; violence and intimidation continue to be used
1876	Supreme Court rules that Native Americans are not considered U.S. citizens and therefore cannot vote
1882	Chinese Exclusion Act—People of Chinese ancestry are banned from becoming naturalized U.S. citizens
1887	Dawes Act grants U.S. citizenship to Native Americans who give up tribal affiliations
1890	Indian Naturalization Act—Native Americans must apply (through a similar process to immigration naturalization) and be approved for U.S. citizenship
1919	Native Americans are granted citizenship for service in WWI
1920	19th Amendment grants women the right to vote after 70+ years of activism
1922/ 1923	Supreme Court rules that Japanese ancestry and people of Asian Indian ancestry are not eligible to become naturalized U.S. citizens
1924	Indian Citizenship Act grants U.S. citizenship to Native Americans; laws and policies enacted to prohibit access to voting
1925	Congress bans people of Filipino ancestry from citizenship unless they serve three years in the Navy
1943	Chinese Exclusion Act repealed
1947	Following a lawsuit, New Mexico and Arizona are required to grant the right to vote to Native Americans
1952	McCarran-Walter Act passed, granting people of Asian ancestry the right to naturalize as U.S. citizens
1961	23rd Amendment passed, granting D.C. residents the right to vote in Presidential elections

1964	24th Amendment passed, banning the use of poll taxes in federal elections
1965	*Voting Rights Act (VRA) is passed, prohibiting discriminatory voter restrictions based on race and ethnic discrimination and providing federal oversight mechanisms
1971	26th Amendment lowers voting age to 18; Federal Election Campaign Act is passed, establishing a National Clearinghouse for information on election administration
1974	The Supreme Court rules that states may deny the right to vote for people with felony convictions.
1975	VRA Amended to require assistance be provided to language minority citizens
1984	Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act passed, requiring polling places to be accessible to people with disabilities, provide registration and voting aids to disabled or elderly voters; if no physically accessible location is available, election officials are required to provide another means of voting
1986	*Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) passed, granting the U.S. Armed Forces and other overseas voters the right to register and vote by mail
1990	Americans with Disabilities Act is passed, requiring polling places to meet accessibility standards and provide services to people with disabilities
1993	*National Voter Registration Act—Expands voter registration opportunities by requiring voter registration forms to be provided at motor vehicle administrations and other state agencies, including the offices that administer state assistance programs
2000	Federal court rules that people living in U.S. territories are U.S. citizens, but do not have the right to vote for U.S. presidents
2002	*Help America Vote Act passed, enacting a massive voting reform initiative to address voting systems and voter access, which instated a federal mandate for minimum election administration standards across the states
2009	*Military and Overseas Voting Empowerment Act passed, improving the access granted to voters through UOCAVA by requiring electronic access to voting, regulating mailing timelines for absentee ballots, and developing a free access system to inform military and overseas voters about the status of their ballots

An asterisk () indicates that the legislation listed is one of the five federal voting rights laws in place: The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA), the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986 (UOCAVA), the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA), the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), and the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act of 2009 (MOVE Act).*

A Summary of the Current Voting Rights Landscape

Though attempts have been made to synchronize existing voting regulations, currently, the U.S. has a patchwork of federal, state, and county laws and policies. There are federal requirements around mandatory minimum election administration practices, including requiring provisional voting, distribution of voting information, updated and upgraded voting equipment, statewide voter registration databases, voter identification procedures, administrative complaint procedures.⁷ Generally, state legislatures govern state election policies on ID requirements, residency rules, early and absentee voting practices, and restoration of voting rights for formerly incarcerated individuals. County level legislation can govern ballot design, voter education, poll worker training, voter-registration maintenance, polling locations, hours, and standards.⁸

And even though protections are in place, history continues to repeat itself: election laws are politicized to disenfranchise voters. In fact, the politicization of election laws further magnified following the 2010 election.⁹ From the start of 2011 leading up to the 2012 election, the surge of legislative tactics designed to suppress voter access and engagement in elections intensified. In just 22 months, state legislatures across 41 states introduced over 180 bills specifically designed to **restrict** voting access to the polls.¹⁰

In 2013, the Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* struck down a key provision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA)—the provision that certain jurisdictions with a history of discriminatory voting practices had to obtain preclearance from the U.S. Attorney General or a three-judge panel in D.C. in order to change voting practices. The intention of this provision of the VRA was to ensure that these districts did not create voting laws to disenfranchise eligible voters. The effect of this is significant: in districts with limited voter engagement, it is now easier for legislators to enact election protocols that further discriminate against minority voters—including people of color, seniors, students, formerly incarcerated individuals, and LGBTQ people—and it has become harder to monitor or challenge discriminatory laws.¹¹

The message is clear: **voting rights are still the frontline in the battle for civil rights.**

An Overview of Restrictive Voting Practices

The current state of voting rights is appalling. In the last five years, we have seen a resurgence of laws/policies introduced at the state and local level to restrict the voting access of eligible voters. The laws have an adverse impact on certain voters, such as people of color, people with disabilities, people with low income or limited financial access, people who are experiencing homelessness, LGBTQ people, women, students, older adults, and people with prior felony convictions.¹²

Voter suppression laws are always spun as attempts to prevent voter fraud. However, investigations into voter fraud have continually debunked the notion that fraud is prevalent.¹³ Extensive research done on voter discrimination shows that poor people, people of color, people with disabilities, people with prior felony convictions, people who are homeless, and people who lack an updated photo ID are disproportionately affected by discriminatory voting laws and far more likely to experience barriers to exercising their civic duty. So, though they are disguised as attempts to address voter fraud, these laws/policies are barriers for eligible voters seeking to exercise their civic duty.

And though voter discrimination has been ongoing, efforts to implement and enforce discriminatory voting laws have intensified since 2011. As such, voting rights advocates have had to remain even more attentive to the political landscape. Like many other investigations of voter discrimination, the National Commission on Voting Rights issued a report on the state of Minority voting rights, and found that: despite the long-standing presence of the Voting Rights Act since 1965, voter discrimination is frequent and continues to be a problem. The report finds that discrimination is not limited to one region of the country, but some areas (such as the South and Southwest) have worse records of voting discrimination; that voting discrimination comes in many forms; that voting discrimination significantly affects people of color; and new kinds of voting discrimination are evolving alongside long-standing forms of discrimination.¹⁴

Since 2010, 21 states have enacted laws that make it harder to vote, and 15 states will have these restrictions in place for the first time during the 2016 election.¹⁵ Below is a quick reference chart highlighting some of the discriminatory voter suppression tactics in use over the last five years. In many cases, commonplace voting laws or regulations are used to produce a discriminatory impact, and often, this is the intention of the politician enacting the legislation or measure.

Type	Practices Resulting in Voter Suppression/Discrimination	Description
Legislative/Governance	Redistricting	Changes made to jurisdiction boundaries to alter the size and range of the district boundaries. This becomes a voter suppression tactic when these changes result in discriminatory district lines, preventing meaningful representation of the population in the district, and—when done intentionally—is known as gerrymandering.
	Composition of the local government	Changes made during or leading up to an election cycle to alter the size of County Commissions or City Councils, or to alter the method of election. This becomes a voter suppression tactic when these changes prevent meaningful representation of the district population (includes changing a single-member district to an at-large or multi-member district).
	Voting laws, including: - Local Resolution	A voting measure adopted at the local level used to pressure state legislatures to enact a particular measure at the state-level. This is a voter suppression tactic when used by local legislators to intentionally create an environment that confuses the electorate about voting requirements. ¹⁶
	- Replacement Bills - State level constitutional amendment	A tactical response to the rejection of a piece of legislation, wherein the legislator introduces a series of smaller bills to result in the original bill's intended effect. As a voter suppression tactic, legislators use replacement bills to exact a voter suppression measure with discriminatory impact. ¹⁷ A permanent change made to a state constitution. This becomes a voter suppression tactic when the proposed changes would embed a voting law with a discriminatory impact (intended or not) into the state constitution ¹⁸
Polling Places	Number of Available Polling Places	Changes made to the number of or location of polling locations. This becomes a voter suppression tactic when changes are made to polling places without significant public notice, including moving, consolidating, or eliminating polling locations, or selecting polling places that do not meet accessibility requirements.
	Limits on Assistance at the Polls	Measures that place legal restrictions on the number of people an individual may assist at the polls or the kind of assistance that can be provided. This is recognized as a voter suppression tactic because a wide range of people need assistance at or getting to the polls, including seniors, people in assisted living facilities, language minorities, people with disabilities, students, people who are homeless, and new citizens. Sometimes, just two people can be assisted before the assistance is criminalized. ¹⁹
	Denial of language assistance at the polls	Federal requirements for translation and language assistance at the polls have a minimum threshold to trigger these services. In addition, recently enacted laws have also reduced the number of languages for available voting materials. As a result, citizens who lack English proficiency are turned away at the polls.
	Accessibility requirements	Many polling places (including those modified on short notice) do not comply with accessibility requirements provided in the Americans with Disabilities Act. As a result, polling places or equipment that are not ADA compliant become a barrier to the polls for people with disabilities. In fact, 31 states report that ensuring accessibility is challenging. ²⁰

Type	Practices Resulting in Voter Suppression/Discrimination	Description
Registration and Identity Documents	Changes to documents required, including: - Proof of citizenship to register - Photo ID to vote	Requires a citizen to provide proof of citizenship in order to register to vote. This is regarded as a voter suppression tactic because it disproportionately impacts minorities, specifically seniors, students, people with disabilities, people in poverty, people experiencing homelessness, and new citizens. It is worth noting that an estimated 7% of Americans do not have proof of citizenship readily available, and it is costly to acquire (in some cases, \$450 to \$600 per document). ²¹ Requires a citizen to provide a specific form of government-issued ID in order to cast a ballot. This is regarded as a voter suppression tactic because it disproportionately impacts minorities, specifically people of color, people in poverty, seniors, students, trans voters, people with disabilities, and people experiencing homelessness. It is worth noting that an estimated 11% of Americans do not readily have proof of identification, and in many cases obtaining it is costly to acquire. ²²
	Relocation/Residency Requirements	Residency requirements are regulated by a state or district. In many cases, the lack of uniformity in laws regarding voters who move to new jurisdictions (within the same state or across state lines) can result in strict barriers that can prohibit the new resident from voting. This is problematic given that approximately 29 million Americans move each year and over 450,000 adults in the US are homeless every night. ²³
	Restrictions on Voter Registration Drives	Some states or jurisdictions place restrictions on voter registration drives. This is regarded as a voter suppression tactic as it has a discriminatory impact on people of color, low-income people, seniors, and other minority communities, all of whom are more likely to participate in voter registration drives. These restrictions and penalties prevent community organizations from assisting eligible, unregistered voters from minority communities. ²⁴
	Elimination of Same-Day Registration	Prevents voters from updating their registration or registering for the first time on Election day. This is regarded as a voter suppression tactic as it prevents eligible voters from updating their voting records or registering. Disproportionately, the voters who use same-day registration are people of color, low-income people, people who move frequently, students, young voters, and people who are homeless. It is worth noting that states with same-day voter registration have an average voter turnout 10% higher than those that do not, and same day registration reduces the need for provisional ballots. ²⁵

Type	Practices Resulting in Voter Suppression/Discrimination	Description
Voting	Laws to reduce/eliminate early voting	These laws reduce or eliminate the amount of time prior to an election that eligible voters have to vote. This is regarded as a voter suppression tactic because it results in preventing voters from accessing the polls in the manner that they are able. Significant portions of voters that use early voting are people of color, people in poverty, people with disabilities, and people in rural settings—as they are often not able to access the polls on election day. In addition, reductions in early voting exacerbate the lines on Election day. ²⁶
	Laws to reduce/eliminate absentee voting	These laws reduce or eliminate the option for absentee voting, either by eliminating the option to vote absentee or by requiring a verified excuse to vote absentee. This is regarded as a voter suppression tactic because it prevents voters from accessing the polls in the manner that they are able. Significant portions of voters that use early voting are people of color, people in poverty, people with disabilities, and people in rural settings—as they are often not able to access the polls on election day. ²⁷
	Felony Disenfranchisement	A temporary or permanent ban from voting for citizens currently or previously convicted of a felony. This is regarded as a voter suppression tactic because it directly targets a demographic of citizens and strips them of their rights, sometimes permanently. (Disproportionately affects African Americans, disenfranchising 7.7% of the total African American population) ²⁸
	Increased use of provisional ballots	Recently, there have been a number of changes to laws increasing the circumstances under which a provision ballot is required. Typically, provisional ballots are used in circumstances when a voter's eligibility is called into question. However, these changing laws are not always accompanied with adequate training, and as a result, provisional ballots are frequently and erroneously used by poll workers who may not understand the appropriate uses, often resulting in the targeting of people of color, new citizens, transgender individuals, or anyone else the poll worker may deem suspicious. ²⁹

A Discussion of Voting Rights as an LGBTQ Issue

The tactics used to suppress voter participation disproportionately impact minority populations, particularly racial, ethnic, and language minorities, people in poverty, people in rural communities, people with disabilities, seniors, students, people who are experiencing homelessness, and people with current or prior felony convictions. Though the LGBTQ community has not been explicitly targeted through voter suppression tactics, they can and do still experience voter discrimination and barriers to accessing the polls. The LGBTQ community is comprised of people from all backgrounds, including all races, ethnicities, economic and social backgrounds, ages, abilities, genders, sexual orientations, criminal histories, regions of the country. As one of the most diverse communities in the country, the LGBTQ community actually faces a broad range of possible voting rights discrimination.

Though there is no national comprehensive study of LGBTQ people, population studies indicate that approximately 3.4%–3.8% of Americans identify as LGBTQ,³⁰ and that there are more than 9 million LGBTQ adults in the U.S. today.³¹ **Overall, research suggests that—compared to the general population—members of the LGBTQ community are more likely to identify as people of color, to live in poverty, to have a disability, to lack an updated photo ID, to experience homelessness, or to come into contact with the criminal justice system.** Given that each of these populations experiences voter discrimination, it is clear that the implementation of restrictive voting practices is also an attack on LGBTQ voters.

Racial and Ethnic Discrimination—

Racial and ethnic discrimination has been and continues to be the central battleground for voting rights in the U.S. Historically, much of the voter discrimination was explicit: racial and ethnic minorities couldn't become citizens and had no right to vote; then, racial and ethnic minorities could become citizens, but were explicitly restricted from voting. As laws emerged to ban such explicit discriminatory practices, the voter discrimination became less overt, but remained just as targeted: either enacting restrictions associated with demographic characteristics of racial and ethnic minorities (literacy tests, poll taxes)³² or restricting political access or representatives for minorities (redistricting, changing the size of local political offices).³³

Even today, this kind of targeted voter discrimination against people of color continues to exist, including the use of: stringent registration requirements, limited availability of voting materials in languages other than English, elimination of same-day voter registration, reduction of early/absentee voting, restrictions on voter registration drives, photo ID requirements, proof of citizenship requirements, redistricting that prevents meaningful representation, modifications to the number of city council seats, and felony disenfranchisement.

Racial and ethnic minorities make up less than 30% of the voting-eligible U.S. population,³⁴ and due to their diverse composition, a number of discriminatory voter practices impact access to the polls. As 75% of naturalized citizens are racial or ethnic minorities,³⁵ racial and ethnic minorities are targeted with proof of citizenship requirements and harassment at the polls. In addition, with over 25 million residents with limited English proficiency in the U.S. today, lack of language access and translation are barriers to registration and voting polls, particularly when the Federal standards for language translation have a minimum threshold.³⁶

Studies estimate that people of color are more likely to identify as LGBTQ than white Americans—that is, 4.6% of African-Americans, 4.0% of Hispanic-Americans, and 4.3% of Asian-Americans, compared to just 3.2% of white-Americans.³⁷ Further—studies show that of the 9 million LGBTQ people in the U.S., an estimated 37% identify as racial/ethnic minorities (compared to 28% of non-LGBTQ people).³⁸ With over 3 million LGBTQ people of color in the U.S., LGBTQ people comprise a sizeable number of voters of color who are most impacted by voter suppression tactics targeting racial and ethnic minorities.

Poverty–

Poverty is a significant challenge to voting rights. Many of the voter suppression tactics involve restricting voting options, preventing absentee or early voting, or limiting the days and times for voters to cast their ballot. Further, tactics may include imposing costly ID requirements, changing polling locations, registration requirements, or last-minute changes to voting practices. In addition, people living in poverty often live far from polling places and ID-issuing offices, have limited flexibility in their work schedules, have limited resources, and/or may not readily have access to a computer or the internet. Nearly 500,000 eligible voters lack access to a vehicle, many of whom live in rural areas without access to public transportation.³⁹

For those living in poverty, having minimal resources, or living far from the polls, early voting is not a mere question of convenience, it is a question of access to the polls. Early voting has been shown to be beneficial to voters, particularly voters from minority and/or low-income communities, and has been shown to cut down on lines during Election Day.⁴⁰ For many people, resources such as transportation, housing, a good job, a stable income, education, and childcare cannot be taken for granted.⁴¹ Because of this, the elimination of early or absentee voting can prevent someone with limited resources and/or in rural areas from voting because they may be unable to request or afford the time off, the cost of additional childcare, or the cost of transit. Moreover, last minute changes to polling locations or voting requirements are tactics intended to confuse voters who already have limited time and resources to get to the polling location on Election Day.

Nearly half of all non-voters have family incomes of less than \$30,000 a year.⁴² Studies show that LGBTQ people are more likely to be poor than heterosexual people, with 35% of LGBTQ people living on less than \$24,000 a year, as compared to 25% of heterosexual people.⁴³ More significantly, **transgender people are four times more likely to be living in extreme poverty** (less than \$10,000 a year) than cisgender people.⁴⁴

Disability–

For people with disabilities, there are many kinds of barriers to voting which can include: a registration website that is not accessible to individuals using screen readers; a lack of reliable transportation for the voter; the physical inaccessibility of the polling venue (e.g. no ADA-compliant parking, passenger drop-off, sidewalks, ramps, doors, hallways, or elevators); a lack of curbside voting; confusing voting process or difficult-to-use polling machines; or the district may not offer voting by mail (which over 25% of voters with disabilities use).⁴⁵

There are an estimated 35 million voting-age people living with disabilities in the U.S.,⁴⁶ and studies show that the prevalence of disability is higher in the LGBTQ community than in the heterosexual community: an estimated 30-36% of LGBTQ people compared to 20-25% of heterosexual people.⁴⁷ Of the 35 million voting-age people with disabilities, 69% are registered to vote, of which, 15.6 million turned out in the 2012 election.⁴⁸ It is estimated that 30% of voters with disabilities experienced difficulties at the polling place during the 2012 election.⁴⁹ A total of 31 states reported that ensuring polling place accessibility is challenging, and it is estimated that only 27% of polling places have no potential impediments to voting.⁵⁰ Due to this, the voter turnout rate is lower for people with disabilities than for people without disabilities, even though registration rates are relatively comparable.⁵¹ Due to the Help America Vote Act of 2002 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, election commissions are required to ensure that polling places and methods are accessible to those living with disabilities; however, the laws are not strong enough to fully protect the voting rights of people with disabilities.⁵² In fact, many people with disabilities choose not to vote because they expect to encounter difficulties voting.⁵³

Lack of ID–

With the increasing number of voter ID laws being enacted (13 states passed voter ID laws between 2011 and 2014), the lack of appropriate or updated photo ID is a huge barrier to accessing the ballot. The process to obtain photo ID can be cost-prohibitive, time-intensive, or impossible. Seniors, students, people living with disabilities, people in rural areas, or in poverty may not be able to afford the time and cost of obtaining an ID, including traveling long distances to the local department of motor vehicles to obtain an ID. And, LGBTQ people, particularly transgender and gender nonconforming people are far more likely to lack valid photo ID due to the patchwork of discriminatory laws that regulate name and gender change.⁵⁴ Depending on where they live or were born, transgender people may not be able to obtain an updated state-issued ID that reflects their name and gender without undergoing highly invasive and costly surgical requirements, or other costly legal processes.⁵⁵ As a result, transgender voters are turned away from the polls, or otherwise face discrimination or harassment when they present a valid photo ID that does not match their current gender identity; up to 22% of transgender people have been denied equal treatment or have been harassed by government officials when showing incongruent identification.⁵⁶

Over 21 million Americans—that is, 11% of U.S. citizens—lack access to appropriate photo ID, including seniors, people of color, people in poverty, people in rural areas, and transgender people.⁵⁷ The figures are staggering: 18% of seniors, 25% of African-Americans, 15% of low-income people have no current, valid photo ID,⁵⁸ and the figures are worse for transgender citizens: 41% lack an updated driver’s license, 74 % lack an updated U.S. passport, and 27% who had transitioned had no identity documents or records that list their current gender.⁵⁹ Even for those in states that issue “free IDs,” eligible voters in need of ID often do not have access to a vehicle or public transit, and the offices can be up to 10 miles away with limited business hours. In addition, the “free IDs” often require other proof of identity documents—such as a birth certificate or marriage license—which cost additional fees to obtain.⁶⁰

Lack of Fixed, Permanent Home–

Both students and people who are homeless can be uncertain of their ability to vote, as both may lack a permanent place of residence in their district.

Students across the country face a difficult decision of deciding where to register to vote, as the definitions of residency ultimately depend on the student’s intention of long-term residence. For LGBTQ students, questions of long term residence may be difficult to define, particularly if they do not want to identify their parent’s residence as a permanent home. Depending on the state regulation, students can define their residency at the school if they intend to establish residency in the state of their school; however, county election officials can deny a student’s residency application or an inspector can challenge a student’s eligibility to vote at the polls, particularly if photo ID laws are in effect and student ID is not considered an acceptable form of ID.⁶¹ While students can appeal the registration denial and the challenges to voter eligibility, the confusion around this process can result in students not voting or ballots being lost.

In terms of homelessness, data shows that over 600,000 people in the U.S. are homeless on any given night, approximately 75% of whom are 18 years or older.⁶² And although there are no clear estimates that indicate the proportion of homeless adults that are LGBTQ, studies show that approximately 40% of homeless youth are LGBTQ⁶³ and that 20% of transgender people have experienced homelessness in their lives, and 20% of transgender people have experienced housing discrimination.⁶⁴ Due to the stigma and lack of resources, many people assume that individuals need a permanent, fixed address in order to vote, which is not true. Homeless citizens can vote, but are faced with the numerous barriers to exercising their legal rights, such as legal obstacles, costly ID documents, and complicated registration requirements.⁶⁵

Criminal status—

Felony disenfranchisement—the practice of restricting or altogether rescinding the right to vote for people who have been convicted of felonies—is a common practice across the U.S. legislated by state governments. Though the right to vote may not be someone’s biggest concern upon leaving prison (since other major reentry concerns—such as housing, education, employment, and healthcare—are more urgent needs), felony disenfranchisement is still a significant matter to address since the restrictions are not always temporary.

All but two states (Maine and Vermont) prevent people convicted of felonies from voting during their time in prison, and a patchwork of laws govern the voting eligibility of people previously convicted of a felony. The restrictions range from restrictions while on parole to a lifetime ban, such that people formerly convicted of a felony may never regain the right to vote.⁶⁶ Currently, an estimated 6 million people are prohibited from participating in voting due to a prior history of felony conviction, even though they have completed their sentences.⁶⁷

Due to laws and profiling practices in place, felony disenfranchisement disproportionately affects people of color,⁶⁸ LGBTQ people, and people living with HIV,⁶⁹ since these groups are disproportionately targeted by law enforcement and subject to discriminatory laws, which result in higher rates of profiling and arrest.⁷⁰ Across the U.S., 13% of the total African American population is denied the right to vote due to prior felony convictions; and more than 60% of people currently in prison are people of color (though people of color make up less than 30% of the U.S. population).⁷¹ And though demographic information for LGBTQ people in prisons is not recorded, the heightened rates of discrimination towards LGBTQ people leads to heightened rates of contact with the criminal justice system: in a study conducted by Lambda Legal, 73% of LGBTQ people surveyed had contact with a police officer in the last 5 years.⁷² To that end, a disproportionately high number of transgender adults have spent time in prison: 16%, as compared to a baseline of 2.7% of adults who have been to prison.⁷³

SECTION II

Tools for Voting Advocates

- Action Opportunities
- Advocacy Tools
 - The following pages are samples to use and print.*
 - LGBTQ Voting Rights Information
 - Fact Sheet
 - Talking Points
 - Sample Tweets
 - Voting Rights Advancement Act Tools
 - Fact Sheet
 - Sample press release
 - Sample op-ed
 - Voter Assistance Tools
 - Voter Checklist
 - Voter Assistance Guides (Voter Eligibility FAQ Sheet, Voter Registration FAQ Sheet, Voting FAQ Sheet)
- Voting Rights Reference Guides

Action Opportunities

The following are some of the available action opportunities that organizations and individuals can take to mobilize for voting rights. We encourage individuals and organizations of all backgrounds, affiliations, denominations, and faith communities to take action for voting rights, using any of the actions provided.

Legislative Advocacy

Support the Voting Rights Advancement Act

Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015 (S. 1659/HR. 2867)

A new bill, introduced in June 24, 2015, in response to the 2013 Supreme Court *Shelby County v. Holder* decision designed to aid the protections in the Voting Rights Amendment of 1965. A VRAA fact sheet is included in this toolkit on page 28.

- a. Sign on to the coalition letter in favor of the VRAA:
LGBTQ/allied organizations that would like to express support for the VRAA may sign onto this coalition letter: <http://bit.ly/1V4Ql6J>.
- b. Issue a press release on behalf of your organization in favor of VRAA
(Sample included in toolkit on page 29)
- c. Write an op-ed on behalf of your organization in favor of the VRAA
(Sample included in toolkit on page 30)

Plan a Lobby Day for Your Organization/Team

Select the bills, issues, and pieces of legislation that matter to you, such as the VRAA. Decide how many people can go and reach out to the offices for their members of Congress to schedule meetings. Plan your talking points and prepare fact sheets to leave behind with the member or their staff.

Lobby Your Members of Congress

Reach out to your members of Congress by phone, in person, or by mail. Express your concerns and provide fact sheets and other materials. Call your members of Congress to share your concerns about voting rights/access. You can contact your members of Congress by calling the Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121.

Community Organizing

There are a number of ways to engage with your community by organizing. **The most important requirements are that you get informed about your local laws, be vigilant and vocal about changes taking place in your district, and support community members who need help to register and vote.** Regardless of how you engage, be sure to check your local laws. Some laws place restrictions on who is able to host voter registration drives, and what voter assistance may look like.

Be proactive Publically & Locally

- a. Organize your community around voting rights. Host a town hall or community event to discuss the state of the Voting Rights Act and the importance of the Voting Rights Advancement Act
- b. Use social media to promote voter education, bolster voter engagement, support registration initiatives, share important dates and deadlines for elections, and voting day contacts for reporting harassment or problems at the polls
- c. Organize a press event, a public rally, or an issue forum with local leaders and experts to educate the public and draw attention to the issue at hand
- d. Attend events where your elected officials are present and ask what they plan to do to restore the Voting Rights Act
- e. Publish Op-Eds, Press Releases, Blogs
- f. Prepare info sheets and fact sheets on your topics of concern

Promote Voter Education

- a. Develop and distribute briefs on issues related to your community or on upcoming legislation
- b. Develop and distribute briefs on candidates
- c. Use social media and email to share voter education information, particularly resource guides and toolkits
- d. Track changes being made to election laws or the voting process; notify your local community members and civil rights advocates
- e. Encourage people to discuss voting rights and registration with their families, friends, and neighbors

Bolster Voter Engagement Initiatives

- a. Use social media to:
 - Recruit volunteers to pass out voter education materials or to assist eligible voters with registration
 - Recruit volunteers to support voters in navigating the process of getting appropriate ID
 - Encourage volunteers to become poll workers/poll monitors
 - Encourage community members to speak with their members of Congress
- b. If legally able, provide assistance to or collect a fund to cover costs for voters who need assistance getting necessary ID, and or to/from polls

- c. Proactively assess polling site accessibility compliance:
 - http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/voting_accessibility.aspx
 - <http://www.ada.gov/votingscrn.pdf>
- d. Volunteer with local get-out-the-vote campaigns to reach out to voters

Support Voter Registration

- a. September 22 is National Voter Registration Day. Sign your organization up as a partner and download their toolkit. <http://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/partners/>
- b. If legally able, host a voter registration drive at your organization or in partnership with community centers, social centers, senior centers, universities, libraries, gyms/YMCA. This is a useful guide for planning a voter registration drive: http://nationalhomeless.org/projects/vote/Manual_2012.pdf
- c. Use social media to encourage voter registration among your constituents. Regularly message your constituents via different social media channels with messages encouraging constituents:
 - to check their registration status,
 - to register,
 - to encourage friends and family to register,
 - to promote registration resource guides,
 - or to offer your organization or another organization as a registration resource/support
 - to ensure voters know when the registration deadlines are
- d. Host phone banks to promote voter registration and to recruit volunteers to assist with voter registration initiatives

Provide Voting Day Support

- a. If legally able, recruit volunteers for childcare, voting day transportation/carpool network, or to promote poll worker volunteer opportunities
- b. Become a poll worker: http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/become_a_poll_worker.aspx
- c. Report discrimination, harassment, or other kinds of problems at the polls to Election Protection 866-OUR-VOTE/1-888-VE-Y-VOTA and to Department of Justice at (800) 253-3931

Vote

- a. Use the power of your voice and your vote to be heard at the ballot box. Get informed, know what's on the ballot, and decide what's important to you. Be sure you're registered and prepared what you need to take with you to vote. Be sure to cast a vote for all items on the ballot. Even if the issues are not interesting to you, and you are not thrilled about the candidates on the ballot, it is still important to cast your vote.



NATIONAL LGBTQ TASK FORCE ACTION FUND

LGBTQ Voting Rights

July 13, 2015

Voting Rights are LGBTQ Rights

Voting rights are an important issue for U.S. citizens, including those that are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer (LGBTQ). Over the course of U.S. history, the right to vote has been a political battleground. Even with (hard-won) protections in place, new voter suppression tactics continue to emerge that are designed to restrict access to the polls.

Voter suppression laws are always spun as attempts to prevent voter fraud. However, investigations into voter fraud have continually debunked this notion. Extensive research done on voter discrimination shows that poor people, people of color, people with disabilities, people with prior felony convictions, people who are homeless, and people who lack a photo ID that meets specific requirements are disproportionately affected by discriminatory voting laws, and far more likely to experience barriers to exercising their civic duty.

LGBTQ people come from all racial, ethnic, economic, and social backgrounds. Members of the LGBTQ community are far more likely than the general population to be disabled, or to experience poverty, homelessness, and come into contact with the criminal justice system. Moreover, LGBTQ people, particularly transgender and gender nonconforming people are far more likely to lack valid photo ID due to the patchwork of discriminatory laws that regulate name and gender change.

Voter Suppression Tactics in Use

This summer marks the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and yet, voter discrimination is frequent and continues to be a problem. Tactics used to discriminate against voters are not limited to one region of the country. The tactics in use come in many forms at the state and local level; many new kinds are evolving alongside long-standing forms of discrimination. A list of commonly employed voter suppression tactics includes:

- Changes to district or municipality boundaries, including redistricting in regions with high proportions of minority voters
- Changes to the composition of the local government, including county commissions
- Changes to voting laws, including the introduction of:
 - Local measures/resolutions adopted to confuse voters about legal requirements; also used to pressure state legislatures to legally adopt the measures
 - Replacement bills, used to reintroduce a series of small components of voting rights laws that were previously rejected as discriminatory
 - State level constitutional amendments to voting rights laws
- Moving, consolidating, or eliminating polling places
- Laws limiting assistance provided at the polls
- Denial of language assistance at the polls and poorly translated ballots
- Polling places that do not comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements
- Implementation of mandatory photo ID requirements
- Intensified scrutiny of proof of citizenship required for registration
- Disqualification of registration based on a recent move or residency requirement
- Restrictions on organizations seeking to host voter registration drives
- Reducing or eliminating early voting opportunities or absentee voting opportunities
- Mandatory waiting periods or permanent bans against citizens with prior felony convictions
- Restrictive and confusing provisional ballot requirements, increased use of provisional ballots

Action Opportunities

There are a number of ways to take action to support voting rights.

With Legislation:

- Tell your member of congress to support the Voting Rights Advancement Act, (S. 1659/HR. 2867). This recently introduced federal legislation would restore the Voting Rights Act and provide necessary protections to voters. It requires federal preclearance for changes in voting laws in districts with a history of voter discrimination and strengthens the ability of the courts to protect citizens put at risk by discriminatory voting practices, whether intended or not. It also requires districts to publicly disclose changes and information related to voting in the district and expands the federal observer program so that federal observers can continue to keep voters safe from discrimination and harassment. It's your right as a citizen to share your interests and concerns with public servants elected to represent you. You can organize a lobby day or call your members of Congress using the Congressional switchboard: 202-224-3121.

In the Community:

- **Get informed.** This handout provides the links to a number of resources, including those that provide more detailed explanations of voting rights history and the voter suppression tactics in use. Being an informed voter and a prepared voting advocate is the most important tool in engaging other voters and fighting suppression tactics.
- **Use social media** to encourage friends, family, and community members to register and vote in all elections; educate them about voting rights and encourage them to volunteer with voting rights initiatives.
- **Monitor changes to voting laws** by keeping an eye on your local election commissions: http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/contact_your_state.aspx
- **Organize** a voter registration drive, voter carpool, or voting day daycare in conjunction with a local community center, social center, senior center, university, library, gym, or YMCA: <http://www.rockthevote.com/assets/publications/field/voter-registration-how-to.pdf>
- **Check the accessibility** of your polling place: <http://www.eac.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/Quick%20Start-Accessibility.pdf>
- **Become a poll worker:** http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/become_a_poll_worker.aspx
- **Report discrimination, harassment, or other problems** at a polling place or with voting procedures in your jurisdiction:
 - **Call Election Protection** at 1-866-OUR-VOTE or 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA, or by email at email@866ourvote.org
 - **Register a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice** at 1-800-253-3931 or 1-202-307-2767, or by email at voting.section@usdoj.gov, or use the complaint form at <http://www.justice.gov/crt/complaint/votintake/index.php>

List of Resources to Get Informed

The most important thing you can do as an advocate is get informed. The following is a list of voting toolkits, resource guides, and checklists to provide more information about voting rights.

LGBTQ Voting Rights Information:

<http://www.thetaskforce.org/>

The National LGBTQ Task Force provides reports, fact sheets, and press releases on a number of issue areas, including LGBTQ voting rights.

Election Protection Network:

<http://www.866ourvote.org/state>

Provides state-specific information on voter eligibility (including residency, identification, and prior felony convictions); registration process and requirements; and a summary of voting methods, requirements, and deadlines. They can answer general election questions and record any problems at the polls:

- **By telephone** at 1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683)—English
- **By telephone** at 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA (1-888-839-8682)—Spanish
- **By email** at email@866ourvote.org

General Voter FAQ & Voting Checklist:

http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/a_voters_guide_to_federal_elections.aspx

Available in 11 languages: English, Cherokee, Chinese, Dakota, Japanese, Korean, Navajo, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Yupik.

Online Voter Registration:

<https://register.rockthevote.com/>

Note: some states do not offer online registration.

Voting Guide for Transgender People:

<http://transequality.org/issues/resources/voting-while-trans-preparing-voter-id-laws>

Provides an overview of the steps transgender voters should take to ensure their vote is counted.

Local Election Commissions Contact Information:

http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/contact_your_state.aspx

Provides a link to local election commissions contact information and websites. Contact local election commissions for information on voting process, procedures, regulations, accessibility, and what counts as an address for those without a permanent fixed address.

Voter Resources for Advocates Assisting People who are Homeless:

http://nationalhomeless.org/projects/vote/Manual_2012.pdf

Voters do not need a permanent fixed address in order to vote; contact the local election commissions to confirm what may be used as an address. This manual is intended for advocates seeking to set up registration drives or provide general information to voters who are homeless.

Voting Rights for People with Disabilities:

<http://www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-with-a-disability/>

Provides links to state-specific information on accessibility requirements and support.

Long Distance Voter's Absentee/Early Voter Information and Resources:

<http://www.longdistancevoter.org/>

Provides assistance checking voting state, registering to vote, and requesting absentee/early voting ballots for long distance voters, such as people in the military or overseas, as well as absentee, and early voters.

Student Voter Guide:

http://www.brennancenter.org/content/student_voting/

Provides state-specific information for student voters, particularly residency requirements and registration.



NATIONAL LGBTQ TASK FORCE ACTION FUND

Sample Talking Points

Voting Rights are essential to building and sustaining a strong democracy.

- It's a civic duty and a social responsibility—our vote is how we engage with and shape our society; it's how we choose policy makers and send a message of what kind of a society we want to live in. For those of you who saw the movie *Selma*, you may know that this summer marks the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
- In June, over 400 people from national advocacy groups and community organizations travelled to Roanoke, Virginia to demand that Representative Goodlatte, chair of the House Judiciary Committee, hold a hearing on voter discrimination issues and to start the legislative process to address the Supreme Court's *Shelby County v. Holder* decision. The Chairman has argued that voter discrimination is nonexistent and thus he won't schedule a hearing on the issue. It was incredible to see so many diverse groups united to fight for a democracy where all people can participate fully in the voting process.
- Voting rights—meaning who has the right to register to vote, to cast a vote, and to have a vote counted—have remained a long-standing political battle in U.S., one the LGBTQ community is/ should be deeply invested in.

Voting rights are LGBTQ rights.

- The LGBTQ community is one of the most diverse populations in the country.
 - Our community is comprised of people from all races, ethnicities, ages, abilities, socio-economic backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations, religions, and regions of the country.
 - We represent a wide range of people that are being targeted by discriminatory voting rights practices.
- LGBTQ people are members of many of the communities targeted by voter suppression tactics. LGBTQ people are more likely to identify as people of color, to be living in poverty, to have a disability, to have experienced homelessness, or to come into contact with the criminal justice system.
 - In fact, transgender people are **four times** more likely to be living on less than \$10,000 a year (than cisgender people).
- We have love for the issue. 2013 was a heartbreaking year for the LGBTQ community; to have the Supreme Court rule in favor of *Windsor* only to totally gut the Voting Rights Act the very next day with the *Shelby* decision.
- Voting rights are vital for LGBTQ people and our continued success as a movement. We must exercise our power and our voice in all elections, because so often, our rights end up on the ballot.

Voter suppression tactics discriminate against minority voters...

...including people in poverty, people of color, seniors, students, formerly incarcerated individuals, and LGBTQ people.

- Tactics that restrict voting options—including those that prevent absentee or early voting, or limit the days and times for voters to cast their ballot—are attacks on people living in poverty
 - ...who have limited resources to accommodate these restrictions
 - ...who live far from the polling places
 - ...who can't take off of work to vote
- A particular tactic, the implementation of voter ID laws, are a HUGE issue for voting rights.
 - Over 21 million Americans lack a current and "valid" photo ID. This may include:
 - 18% of seniors,
 - 15% of low income people,
 - 25% of African Americans,
 - and 27% of transgender people.
 - Often, the process to obtain photo ID can be cost-prohibitive, time-intensive, or impossible.
- Residency requirements are often used to restrict voting access for people who have recently moved, but are also used to prevent students and people who are homeless from having a clear idea of how to register to vote, even though they are legally able to.
- Some suppression tactics create barriers for people with disabilities, such as moving polling places, restricting access to assistance, or restricting early voting. An estimated 30% of people with disabilities experienced difficulties at the polling place during the 2012 election.
- Felony disenfranchisement is a common practice across the U.S. Due a patchwork of laws governing the voting eligibility for people previously convicted of a felony, an estimated 6 million people are prohibited from participating in voting, even though they have completed their sentence.



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Sample Tweets

Find #LGBTQ resources to advocate for the Voting Rights Advancement Act here: <http://www.taskforceactionfund.org/vra/> #RestoreTheVRA.

Learn about how voter suppression hurts #LGBTQ people—and how to end it. Download our fact sheet: http://www.thetaskforceactionfund.org/downloads/tf_voting_rights_factsheet2.pdf #RestoreTheVRA.

We joined 30 #LGBTQ orgs in a letter to Congress to urge them to pass Voting Rights Advancement Act: http://www.thetaskforceactionfund.org/downloads/vraa_coalition_letter2.pdf #RestoreTheVRA.

On our blog—why voting rights are an #LGBTQ issue: <http://thetaskforceblog.org/2015/07/03/the-task-force-rallying-for-voting-rights-in-roanoke/> ... #RestoreTheVRA.

27% of transgender people in U.S. have no updated ID documents. We must #RestoreTheVRA so #trans people aren't blocked from voting!

29% of #bisexual women live in poverty—and 15% of low-income ppl lack photo ID. We must #RestoretheVRA so all can vote.

#Trans people are 4x more likely to live in poverty—and 15% of low-income ppl lack photo ID. We must #RestoretheVRA so all can vote.

18% of black #bisexual & #lesbian women live in poverty—and 15% of low-income ppl & 27% of black ppl lack photo ID. We must #RestoretheVRA.

By 2030, there will be over 3 million #LGBTQ people over age 65. 18% of seniors lack photo ID. We must #RestoreTheVRA.

The amazing @LaverneCox writes about how voter suppression hurts the trans community: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/laverne-cox/voter-suppression-and-the-transgender-community_b_1737220.html #RestoreTheVRA.

The most successful Civil Rights statute ever enacted MUST be fixed this year. Congress MUST #RestoreTheVRA!

In 1965, the Voting Rights Act was passed. In 2015, it must be restored: <http://t.co/2buUjJK4JZ> #RestoreTheVRA <http://t.co/fiEsyWf8zi>.

Voting discrimination is still a reality across the country—Tell Congress to #RestoreTheVRA: <http://t.co/EKFXn1ih0O>.

Thousands have marched this year to restore voting rights across the country. Congress must act to #RestoretheVRA.

Racial discrimination isn't over. @RepGoodlatte would know that if he held a hearing on voting rights #RestoreTheVRA <http://t.co/2Tjnetr6eL>

It's not enough for members of @HouseGOP to commemorate Selma and Bloody Sunday. They must act to #RestoreTheVRA.

.@SpeakerBoehner commemorated Bloody Sunday on Selma anniversary. Then he did nothing to #RestoreTheVRA. That must change ASAP.

Tell your member of congress to support the Voting Rights Advancement Act—call 202-224-3121. #RestoreTheVRA.

Know your rights! Here is a voting guide for transgender people: <http://transequality.org/issues/resources/voting-while-trans-preparingvoter-id-laws> #RestoreTheVRA.



NATIONAL LGBTQ TASK FORCE ACTION FUND

VRAA Fact Sheet

Bill Summary: Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015 (H.R. 2867 / S. 1659)

Introduced June 24, 2015

Lead Sponsor in the House: Representative Terri Sewell

Lead Sponsor in the Senate: Senator Patrick Leahy

Context:

Voting discrimination continues to be a substantial problem in the U.S. In 2013, with the *Shelby County v. Holder* decision, the Supreme Court struck down a key provision of Voting Rights Act of 1965-- a landmark piece of legislation providing protections to voters. The Supreme Court made the decision-- not because voter discrimination suddenly ceases to exist, but rather--because discrimination persists and the Voting Rights Act must be modernized in order to address the realities of voting discrimination today.

The Voting Rights Advancement Act has received broad and vocal support from the civil rights community because it responds to the unique, modern-day challenges of voting discrimination that has evolved in the 50 years since the Voting Rights Act first passed. The Advancement Act recognizes that changing demographics require tools that protect voters nationwide--especially voters of color, voters who rely on languages other than English, and voters with disabilities. It also requires that jurisdictions make voting changes public and transparent.⁷⁴

Bill Summary:

The Voting Rights Advancement Act would:

- Modernize the preclearance formula, requiring states with a pattern of discrimination to obtain pre-clearance before changing voting laws.
 - Covered practices include: changes to the methods of election, to jurisdiction boundaries, through redistricting, to required voting documentation or qualifications, to multilingual materials, and changes that reduce, consolidate, or relocate voting locations.
 - If, over a period of 10 years, states and local jurisdictions have no violations, the preclearance requirement would be lifted.

- Requires all states and political subdivisions to provide notice and public disclosure for all changes to voting laws that happen within the 180 days prior to an election; submit a summary of resources used for federal elections, including whether the polling places are accessible for people with disabilities
- Grants discretion to a federal court to order a preclearance remedy if it finds any violation of the Voting Rights Act, including a violation based on discriminatory intent or result.
- Expands the Federal Observer program both by permitting the Attorney General to send Federal Observers where she determines a substantial risk of racial discrimination on Election Day, and by clarifying that tribal governments have the ability to request federal election observers.
- Strengthens voting protections for Native Americans and Alaska Natives by requiring more accessible polling locations and voter registration agencies; allowing for absentee voting when polling locations are too far; requiring translation of all registration, voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance or other materials into all written Native languages.

These changes would prevent confusion among voters resulting from changes to local election laws without adequate notice, ensure oversight over changes to the law resulting in a discriminatory intent or impact, and serve to strengthen protections for minority voters--including LGBTQ voters impacted by these discriminatory voting laws.⁷⁵



NATIONAL LGBTQ TASK FORCE ACTION FUND

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August XX, 2015

Contact: [contact information]

[organization] Calls for Restoration of Voting Rights Act

CITY–[organization spokesperson] issued the following statement urging [congress and/or specific senators/representatives] to work to restore the Voting Rights Act on the 50th anniversary of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s signing of the landmark civil rights law:

“Fifty years ago, on August 6, 1965, President Johnson signed into law one of our nation’s most important pieces of civil rights legislation—the Voting Rights Act (VRA). Today, we honor the brave men and women who fought so hard to see this law enacted, and are calling on [congress and/or specific senators/representatives] to restore the vital voting protections lost in the Supreme Court’s destructive *Shelby County v. Holder* decision to gut the VRA.

In the two years since the *Shelby* decision, states and localities across the country have enacted discriminatory voter restrictions across the country. But despite widespread evidence of voting discrimination, Congress has failed to address this modern-day assault on the right to vote.

Congress has no excuse not to act on this issue; it now has two bills—the Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Voting Rights Amendment Act—to restore the VRA. If Congress doesn’t act soon, the American people will experience the first presidential election in more than 50 years without the crucial protections of the Voting Rights Act.

As Congress first did in 1965, and for every reauthorization since then, Congress must come together now to protect the right to vote for all Americans. Fifty years after brave Americans gave their lives for the right to vote, we cannot allow their legacy and the protections they fought for continue to unravel. ”

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NATIONAL LGBTQ TASK FORCE ACTION FUND

50 Years After VRA, Congress Must Restore Voting Protections

By [author]

On August 6, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law our nation's most effective piece of civil rights legislation—the Voting Rights Act. Inspired by the courage and sacrifice of the Selma marchers who risked their lives to secure the right to vote, Congress came together across party lines to pass the VRA and guarantee millions of minority voters the opportunity to participate in their democracy.

But 50 years after President Johnson enacted this historic law, which Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and countless brave Americans fought so hard for, voting rights are still being violated due to the Supreme Court's destructive *Shelby County v. Holder* decision in 2013 to gut the VRA.

Over the past 50 years, the Voting Rights Act has been an indispensable tool in combatting voter discrimination, and has helped transform our nation into a more equal democracy. When it was first enacted, it ended literacy tests, poll taxes, and other tactics designed to keep minority voter away from the ballot box. In the 21st century, it evolved to fight more discrete—but no less pernicious—methods of voting discrimination like inequitable redistricting plans, restrictive voter ID laws, elimination of early voting opportunities, and unfair polling place changes.

In the two years since the *Shelby* decision, our nation has seen a resurgence of laws to limit early voting and increase barriers to voting, putting the right to vote in more danger than at any time in the past 50 years. But despite public outcry over the *Shelby* decision and a bipartisan effort to restore the VRA, congressional leadership has decided to shirk from its historic responsibility and ignore the will of the American people.

As our nation celebrates the 50th anniversary of the VRA, members of Congress from both parties are publicly commemorating and praising both the VRA and the courageous Americans who fought for it. But despite these gestures, many of them have done nothing to restore the strength and effectiveness of the law.

The right to vote is the cornerstone and the language of our democracy: if you don't vote, you don't count. For the past 50 years, protecting the right to vote has been a bipartisan effort. The VRA and its reauthorizations were passed with overwhelming bipartisan majorities and signed by presidents of both parties, including Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush. Congress should be doing all it can to increase voter participation, but instead, it has feigned ignorance of voting discrimination and has attempted to sweep the issue under the rug for the last two years.

The American people can't wait any longer.

Unless Congress acts soon, voters in 2016 will face the first presidential election in 50 years where they will lack crucial protections in federal law to combat racial discrimination in voting. When Congress gets back from recess, its priority must be to restore the Voting Rights Act. It must work with the same urgency as it did in 1965 to protect the fundamental right embedded in our constitution.



NATIONAL LGBTQ TASK FORCE ACTION FUND

Voter Checklist

Before Election Day

- Check your registration status to confirm you are registered with your current legal name and address.
- If necessary/possible, update your registration if your address, name, gender marker, or political affiliation if any have legally changed.
- Check with your State election commission/website to double check your State's:
 - voter identification requirements
 - proof of residency requirements
 - options for voting (in person, early voting, absentee)
 - the location and operating hours of your polling place
 - the timeline and requirements for early voting applications
 - the voting devices used in your jurisdiction
 - available language assistance
- Get informed, learn about the issues and candidates on the ballot.
- Read up on the legal use of provisional ballots.
- Contact your Election Commission with concerns you may have regarding the accessibility of the polling place or polling devices.
- Vote early, if possible.
- Becoming a poll worker in your community.

On Election Day

- Gather your required documents, and any additional documents that may help you establish your identity (such as old ID cards, physician statement, a court order for name change, a utility bill, or other helpful items).
- Go to your polling place on the day of the election during operating hours.
- If necessary, update your registration and provide proof of ID and/or residence.
- If a poll worker is questioning your *eligibility* as a voter, you have the right to request a provisional ballot. If the poll worker is asking you to cast a provisional ballot but your eligibility has not been questioned, you have the right to insist on casting a regular ballot. If you cast a provisional ballot, be sure to record the ballot number, submit the necessary documentation within the required period of time, and check on the status of your ballot.
- Poll workers cannot turn voters away from the polls because they are transgender or gender non-conforming, nor if their gender expression does not conform to their photo ID, nor for any other reason related to transgender identity. The **ONLY** reason a voter may be denied access to the polls is failure to meet voter eligibility requirements.
- **Report harassment, discrimination, or other problems/ concerns immediately to Election Protection Coalition:** 1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683) for English, or 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA (1-888-839-8682) for Spanish.

Resources

- **Voting guides and topical voter information:**
www.866ourvote.org (English) or
<http://veyvota.yaeshora.info> (Spanish)
- **Voter Registration:** <https://register.rockthevote.com>
- **U.S. Election Assistance Commission State Information:**
http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/contact_your_state.aspx
(Primary contact for homeless voters, questions about voting requirements, and eligibility)
- **Voter Checklist:**http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/a_voters_guide_to_federal_elections.aspx
(Available in 11 languages: English, Cherokee, Chinese, Dakota, Japanese, Korean, Navajo, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Yupik)
- **Transgender Voter Resource:** <http://transequality.org/issues/resources/voting-while-trans-preparing-voter-id-laws>
- **Voters with Disabilities:**
<http://www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-with-a-disability>
- **Student Voter Guide:**
http://www.brennancenter.org/content/student_voting
- **Overseas/Absentee/Early Voter Information and Resources:**
<http://www.longdistancevoter.org>
- **People with Felony Convictions:**
<http://restoration.866ourvote.org>

Reporting

Report a problem or ask the Election Protection Coalition a general election or voting question:

- By telephone at 1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683)—English
- By telephone at 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA (1-888-839-8682)—Spanish
- By email at email@866ourvote.org

Report violations of federal voting rights laws to the Department of Justice:

- By email at voting.section@usdoj.gov
- By telephone at (800) 253-3931 (toll free)
- By telephone at (202) 307-2767
- By fax at (202) 307-3961
- By complaint form at
<http://www.justice.gov/crt/complaint/votintake/index.php>
- By letter to the addresses below:
Voting Section
Civil Rights Division
U.S. Department of Justice
Room 7254-NWB
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530



NATIONAL LGBTQ TASK FORCE ACTION FUND

Voter Assistance Guide

Ultimately, the various voter suppression tactics negatively impact LGBTQ voters by creating another barrier preventing those who are otherwise eligible to vote from accessing the polls.

This section is meant to support advocates in answering questions that LGBTQ voters may have and assist in getting eligible voters registered and ready for participating in future elections. Answers may also direct advocates to a resource that can provide further information to resolve the question.

This FAQ guide contains three FAQ sheets, one provides information on voter eligibility, the next on voter registration, and the last on voting. These documents are intended to be a baseline resource, as well as addressing many questions that may arise in preparing LGBTQ eligible-voters to vote. If they choose to vote in person, they should use this document in conjunction with a guide that also references your state voting regulations, such as <http://www.866ourvote.org/state>.

Voting Eligibility FAQ

Who can vote?

- To be eligible to register to vote, you need to be:
 - 18 years or older on the day of the election,
 - a U.S. citizen (domestic-born or naturalized),
 - a current resident based your state's residency criteria
 - and not disqualified for any reason (e.g., felony laws; found incompetent by a court; if you have placed a bet on the election; or if you have already cast a ballot for the election in question).

How do I prepare to vote?

- Check your voter registration status at least 8 weeks prior to an election
 - Some voter suppression tactics involve deleting vote registrations. You can check your registration status here: <http://www.canivote.org>.
- Prepare to register.
 - Check your state's registration deadline and requirements for proof of identity, citizenship, and/or residency: <http://www.866ourvote.org/state>.
 - Gather required documents, and bring any additional documents that will help you affirm your identity (old ID cards, court orders, physician statements).

- Register to vote.
 - If you are not already registered and would like to vote, you will need to register to vote.
 - If are registered to vote, but your name or address has changed since you last registered or your registration is inactive, you will need to re-register to vote. Check your state's protocol on moving: <http://www.866ourvote.org/state>.
 - **Remember, the current name and address on your ID must match the name and address on your voter registration.**

Voting Registration FAQ

How do I register to vote?

- Check your state's registration deadline and requirements, which will provide specific information such as how and when to register and what documents are required: <http://www.866ourvote.org/state>.
- Depending on your state laws, you may register to vote in the following ways:
 - **Online at:** <https://register.rockthevote.com>. (Note: some states do not offer online registration.)
 - **By mail** using the National Mail Voter Registration Form. You can download the National Mail Voter Registration Form (NMVRF) from <http://www.eac.gov/NVRA>.
 - **In person at:**
 - Your state or local voter registration or election office.
 - Your local department of motor vehicles.
 - Public assistance agencies.
 - Armed service recruitment centers.
 - State-funded programs that serve people with disabilities.
 - Any public facility that a state has designated as a voter registration agency.
 - At the polling place on Election Day—If is possible that your local laws may allow you to register at the polls on Election Day.

be you.

- Always be aware of your registration deadline, and the requirements for proof of identity, citizenship, and residence.
 - Voter Registration Card:
The name and address on your current ID needs to match the name and address on your voter registration card. It is worthwhile to bring additional documentation with you to register and to vote. For example, legal name change documents, legal gender change documents, old ID cards, or additional bills sent to your address in your name.
 - Photo ID (if required):
Photo ID requirements often require you to bring a document that has your picture, name, and/or address on it. Check your local election commission for more details. Note: A discrepancy between your current gender presentation and your photo ID does not change your eligibility to vote. Poll workers may not know this, so bring additional documentation with you when you go to vote, including any name/gender change paperwork.
 - Proof of Residence:
Proof of residence generally requires a document that includes your name and current address either as a hard copy or electronic document on your personal smartphone, tablet, or computer.

What if...

- **...I recently moved?**
 - Check your state's policy on moving and registration requirements: <http://www.866ourvote.org/state/>.
 - If you have moved to a new address within your county or state, you may be qualified to vote from your former address or from your new address.
 - If you have moved from one state to another, you may or may not be eligible to vote in your new region of residence.
- **...I'm homeless?**
 - You do not need a permanent fixed address in order to vote. Many states allow voters who are homeless to use a shelter address or a description the location where you usually spend the night.
 - Your local election officials can confirm what may be used as an address. Get your local election official contact information here: http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/contact_your_state.aspx.
- **...I've been previously convicted of a felony?**
 - You may still be able to vote. Check your state's policy on restoration of voting rights for people with prior or current felony convictions: <http://restoration.866ourvote.org>.
 - If your state restores your voting rights, you may need to reregister to vote.

- **...I have a disability?**
 - You can and should vote! Your state has policies in place for voting rights for people living with disabilities and the requirements for accessible voting. Check your state's guide to voting rights and accessibility documents: <http://www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-with-a-disability>.
 - Contact your State or local election office for to provide more specific information: http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/contact_your_state.aspx.
 - If you have questions about the accessibility of your polling place or voting equipment.
 - Some States offer "curbside voting," in which a poll worker brings all voting materials to your car if you cannot leave your car easily. Check with your State or local election office to see if curbside voting is available in your jurisdiction and for additional provisions about voting assistance.
 - If you need assistance registering, getting to the polls, or voting.
 - In addition, your state may permit you to vote early, bring an assistant with you to the polls, or request assistance at the polls.
- **... I go by a different name than my ID indicates?**
 - If you have legally changed your name, you should also update your social security card and identification documents, and re-register to vote.
 - It can take a while to get a new driver license or ID card, so you may continue to vote using your former name until you obtain the required documentation to re-register. Bring any legal paperwork supporting your situation with you as verification.
- **... I have changed my name and have a new ID, but forgot to register to vote under my new name?**
 - You will need to reregister to vote, and may be able to do so on-site. Check your state's registration requirements: <http://www.866ourvote.org/state/>.
- **... the picture on my ID doesn't match my gender expression?**
 - If it is possible, update your photo and gender marker on your ID. Most photo ID requirements require your photo ID must contain a picture of you; they do not require that you present with the gender expression you used when you took the photo. Even if you gender presentation has changed, if it is a photo of you, it is a valid photo ID, even if a poll worker tells you otherwise.
 - If you have concerns that your picture doesn't match your current gender expression, you can consider getting a new photo ID, even if you have not taken steps to change your name and gender. You can do this by submitting an application for duplicate license or ID and pay any additional fees. Be aware that this, while useful for voting purposes, may have the effect of outing you as a transgender person to anyone you show your ID. This is a decision that should be made intentionally, knowing the impacts of changing your photo but not name or gender marker on ID.

Do I need to re-register?

- Generally, if the name and address on your ID do not match your voter registration card, YES, you will need to re-register. In some states, you can do this on Election Day, but it would be good to do this ahead of time to avoid any problems that would disenfranchise you on Election Day.
 - If your name changes, even if you are at the same address, you must fill out an updated voter registration application. Be sure to give your prior name in the space provided.
 - If you have moved, even if your name is the same, you must fill out an updated voter registration application. Remember that you must meet the residency requirements at your new address to vote in that district.

What if I don't have an ID?

- Double check all of the acceptable forms of ID required to register and required to vote—you may have acceptable ID and not know it.
- If you have valid ID but forgot to bring it with you on Election Day, you can still cast a provisional ballot. Provisional ballots require specific follow up procedures, such as returning to the election administration office with the required documents—be sure to complete the process in order to have your vote counted.
- If you do not have any form of ID that is acceptable, you will be given a provisional ballot but it likely will not get counted. You should still go to the polling place and vote—the election workers may be able to help you find a combination of documents that will make you eligible to vote.
- Depending on your state, if you don't have an ID at all, but do have the right documentation, you may be able to obtain a free valid ID in advance of the election (or during the days following the election to ensure that your provisional ballot gets counted). Call your local election officials, who will be able to provide more specific information: http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/contact_your_state.aspx.

So, how do I update my photo, name, gender, and/or address on my government-issued ID?

Policies on updating name, gender, and photos on your government issued ID depend on your state. To find out more, visit the National Center for Transgender Equality's ID Document Center: <http://transequality.org/documents>. In most cases, you will need to submit the application with the appropriate documentation and pay any applicable fees. In addition, review the Voting While Trans Resource guide: <http://transequality.org/issues/resources/voting-while-trans-preparing-voter-id-laws>.

- **Update your picture**—If you are updating your photo ID, you will often need to submit an application for a duplicate license or ID card and ask that a new photo be taken of you. Be sure you know/have proof of your social security number. The law does not require that you bring any additional documentation, but it may be helpful to bring additional items such as an old ID card or physician letter in case you face additional scrutiny.

- **Update your name**—In most cases, to update your name on your ID, you will need a copy of a court ordered name change and you will have needed to change your name with the Social Security Administration (SSA): <http://www.ssa.gov>. Once you have obtained a court ordered name change and your name has been changed with SSA, you can change your name with the DMV.
- **Update your gender marker**—Policies on gender change vary widely by state. Check the National Center for Transgender Equality's ID Document Center: <http://transequality.org/documents> for specific information. In many cases, you will be required to submit documentation from a physician or a court order, along with a completed application for a duplicate license, and payment for any applicable fees.
- **Update your address**—Update your voter registration information each time you move. To update your address on your driver's license or ID card, you can often either need to do so online or in person, and pay the applicable fee. Check with your local department of motor vehicles: <http://www.dmv.org/>.
- Note that you **do not** need to update all aspects of your ID card or license at the same time—you may update any combination of photo, name, address, or gender marker on your ID as long as you have met the requirements. However, though it is legal to update each portion of your identity information at a time, this can be financially expensive and could have the impact of outing you if you are transgender or gender non-conforming.

Voting FAQ

What are my options for voting?

- Depending on your state laws, you can either vote via mail (absentee, overseas, military, or early voting), in-person during early voting (often referred to as an in-person absentee ballot), or in person at your local polling office on the day of the election. Check your state's voting options: <http://www.866ourvote.org/state/>.
- Note: some states require voters seeking to vote absentee to provide a valid excuse, such as being out of town on Election Day.

How do I vote?

- Whether voting by mail or in person, your state election commission will have specific instructions on how to vote. Check your state's voting instructions: <http://www.866ourvote.org/state/>.
- Early voting dates and times vary among States. For information, contact your State or local election office: http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/contact_your_state.aspx
- You will want to observe all deadlines related to voting including deadlines for: registration, submitting an application for absentee ballot, and submission of ballots.
- **When voting absentee...**
 - Be sure to request and submit your ballot according to the deadlines.
 - After you have received your absentee ballot, read the instructions carefully. Sign your name where it is required. If you return your absentee ballot by mail, be certain to put sufficient postage to the return envelope.

- Note any additional requirements, such as including a copy of your photo ID for first time voters or in states with photo ID laws, or including proof of residence.
- If you need help with absentee voting, visit <http://www.longdistancevoter.org/>.
- **When voting in person...**
 - Be sure you are registered on time and find your polling place ahead of time.
 - Gather your required documents, and any additional documents that may help you establish your identity (such as old ID cards, physician statement, a court order for name change, a utility bill, or other helpful items).
 - Go to your polling place on the day of the election; update your registration and provide proof of ID or residence if necessary.

What are the circumstances for the provisional ballot? And if provision ballot, what do I need to make sure my vote gets counted?

- There are no uniform standards for provisional ballots across the U.S., but typically a voter has the right to cast a provisional ballot if they believe they are eligible to vote and are being challenged by election officials at the polls. For information on how provisional ballots work, visit: <http://www.866ourvote.org/issues/provisional-balloting>.
- Even if you met the Federal proof of identification requirement when you registered, some States may require identification at the polling place. You are eligible to cast a provisional ballot if you do not have sufficient identification at the polling place. In addition, in some states where photo IDs are required, absentee ballots submitted without a copy of photo ID may be treated as a provisional ballot, and you will need to submit the photo ID following your provisional ballot requirements.

- Provisional ballots are NOT to be issued if you go to the wrong polling place or if you are registering in-person on election day and do not provide proof of residence.
- Federal law requires States to provide a “free access system” by toll free number and/or the Internet for you to check the status of your provisional ballot. For information, contact your State or local election office: http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/contact_your_state.aspx.

What if the poll worker denies me the right to vote?

- Poll workers cannot turn voters away from the polls because they are transgender or gender non-conforming, nor if their gender expression does not conform to their photo ID, nor for any other reason related to transgender identity. **The ONLY reason a voter may be denied access to the polls is failure to meet voter eligibility requirements.**

How do I report a problem or file a complaint?

- If you experience a problem at a polling place or with voting procedures in your jurisdiction:
 - Call 866-OUR-VOTE (English) or 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA (Spanish).
 - Contact your State or local election office for information on complaint procedures: http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/contact_your_state.aspx.
 - Register a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice at (800) 253-3931 or voting.section@usdoj.gov.

Voting Rights Reference Guides

Voting guides and topical voter information:

www.866ourvote.org (English) or <http://veyvota.yaeshora.info> (Spanish)

Voter Registration: <https://register.rockthevote.com>

U.S. Election Assistance Commission State Information:

http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/contact_your_state.aspx

(Primary contact for homeless voters, questions about voting requirements, and eligibility)

Voter Checklist: http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/a_voters_guide_to_federal_elections.aspx

(Available in 11 languages: English, Cherokee, Chinese, Dakota, Japanese, Korean, Navajo, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Yupik)

Transgender Voter Resource:

<http://transequality.org/issues/resources/voting-while-trans-preparing-voter-id-laws>

Voters with Disabilities: <http://www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-with-a-disability>

Student Voter Guide: http://www.brennancenter.org/content/student_voting

Overseas/Absentee/Early Voter Information and Resources: <http://www.longdistancevoter.org>

People with Felony Convictions: <http://restoration.866ourvote.org>

Additional Voting Rights Resources

ADA Checklist for Polling Places: <http://www.ada.gov/votingscrn.pdf>

Brennan Center’s “How to Talk about Voting” Toolkit for Advocates:

http://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/publications/Talk_About_Voting_2014.pdf

Election Assistance Commission’s Management Guide to Accessibility in Polling Places:

<http://www.eac.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/Quick%20Start-Accessibility.pdf>

Felony Enfranchisement Toolkit:

https://www.aclu.org/files/pdfs/votingrights/righttovote_20080125.pdf

Lawyer’s Committee for Civil Rights Under Law–Voting Rights Toolkit for Civic Organizations:

<https://lawyerscommittee.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/0405.pdf>

Manual for Registration Drives, Education Initiatives, Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns to Engage Low-income and Homeless Voters: http://nationalhomeless.org/projects/vote/Manual_2012.pdf

NAACP National Voting Rights Toolkit:

http://action.naacp.org/page/-/toolkits/NAACP_NationalVotingRightsToolkit.pdf

NAACP Civic Engagement Resources: <http://www.naacp.org/pages/civic-engagement-resources>

National Commission on Voting Rights: Protecting Minority Voters 2014 [Report]:

<http://votingrightstoday.org/ncvr/resources/discriminationreport>

National Commission on Voting Rights: State Profiles:

<http://votingrightstoday.org/ncvr/resources/state-pages>

National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund Voting Rights Page:

<http://www.taskforceactionfund.org/vra>

Strong Families’ Voter Guide and Value’s Checklist:

<http://strongfamiliesmovement.org/assets/docs/SF-Voter-Guide-English.pdf>

Transgender Identity Document Center: <http://transequality.org/documents>

Voter Registration/Health Benefit Exchange Toolkit: <http://www.demos.org/publication/voter-registration-health-benefit-exchanges-toolkit-easy-effective-implementation>

Voting Rights Act for Today Campaign: <http://VRAforToday.org>

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