

THE VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT OF 2015

The Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015 responds to current conditions in voting today by restoring the full protections of the original, bipartisan Voting Rights Act of 1965, which was last reauthorized by Congress in 2006, but gutted by the Supreme Court in 2013.

- Following the *Shelby County* decision two years ago, several states passed sweeping voter suppression laws that disproportionately prevent minorities, the elderly, and the youth from voting.
- The bill provides the tools to address these discriminatory practices and seeks to protect all Americans' right to vote.

The Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015 creates a new coverage formula that applies to all states and hinges on a finding of repeated voting rights violations in the preceding 25 years.

- Significantly, the 25-year period “rolls,” or continuously moves, to keep up with “current conditions,” so that only states that have a recent record of racial discrimination in voting are covered.
- States that have repeated and persistent violations will be covered for a period of 10 years, but if they establish a clean record moving forward, they can come out of coverage.

The Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015 establishes a targeted process for reviewing voting changes in jurisdictions nationwide, focused on measures that have historically been used to discriminate against voters.

- The process for reviewing changes in voting is limited to a set of measures, such as the institution of a voter ID law or the reduction of multilingual voting materials – practices that have historically been found to have the greatest discriminatory impact.

The Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015 also –

- Allows a federal court to order states or jurisdictions to be covered for results-based violations, where the effect of a particular voting measure (including voter ID laws) is to lead to racial discrimination in voting and to deny citizens their right to vote;
- Increases transparency by requiring reasonable public notice for voting changes;
- Allows the Attorney General authority to request federal observers be present anywhere in the country where there is a serious threat of racial discrimination in voting;
- Revises and tailors the preliminary injunction standard for voting rights actions to recognize that there will be cases where there is a need for immediate preliminary relief.
- Increases accessibility and protections for Native American and Alaska Native voters.