

## EXPANDING VOTING RIGHTS

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) calls on state legislators to champion the expansion of voting rights and advocate for the restoration of preclearance requirements, focusing on dismantling barriers that disproportionately affect the Black community. This policy brief underscores the importance of inclusive voting laws and practices, including the critical role of preclearance in preventing discriminatory changes to voting procedures before they take effect. Strengthening voting rights and restoring preclearance are essential for a vibrant democracy and addressing the historical and ongoing disenfranchisement of Black Americans.

### Background:

The right to vote is foundational to democracy. Historically, systemic barriers have been designed and implemented to undermine the electoral participation of Black Americans. These barriers include stringent voter ID laws, limited voting locations, and the disenfranchisement of individuals with felony convictions. The preclearance provision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which required jurisdictions with a history of discriminatory voting practices, was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2013. State legislative changes and the restoration of preclearance requirements are critical to implementing, expanding and protecting voting rights.

### Issues:

- Disproportionate Voting Barriers: Black voters face significant hurdles, from restrictive ID laws to insufficient polling places in their communities.
- Impact of Preclearance Removal: The absence of preclearance has led to the implementation of voting changes that disproportionately disenfranchise Black voters and other marginalized groups. These changes continue to be introduced and implemented today, with 32 states introducing over 150 restrictive bills at the top of 2023 state legislative sessions.

### Our Stance via Resolution:

- No-fault absentee voting should be made available in every state.
- Election Day voting must be administered and fully available with sufficient precincts, machines and poll workers sufficient for the number of eligible voters.
- Early voting must be championed and supported with a minimum of two weeks guaranteed, including weekends.
- Precincts in every community must have working voting machines and disability access.
- Polling locations must be included on college and university campuses.
- Early voting hours and curbside voting should be implemented.
- State legislators should pass resolutions advocating for the restoration of the Voting Rights Act.

**Additional Policy Recommendations:**

**Legislate to Expand Voting Access:** Implement policies to broaden ID acceptance, extend early voting, increase polling locations, and simplify absentee voting.

**Advocate for Preclearance Restoration:** Support federal and state-level efforts to restore and update the preclearance mechanism to reflect current needs and protect against discriminatory voting changes.

**Safeguard Against Voter Roll Purges:** Enact strict criteria and oversight for maintaining voter rolls, protecting against discriminatory purges.

**Voter Education and Engagement:** Increase funding for initiatives aimed at educating and engaging voters, with a focus on communities historically subjected to disenfranchisement.

The NAACP urges state legislators to prioritize the expansion of voting rights and the restoration of preclearance as measures critical to achieving racial justice and maintaining a healthy democracy. By enacting policies that ensure equitable access to the ballot and prevent discriminatory changes to voting laws, states will contribute significantly to building a more inclusive and representative democratic process.