

FREEDOM TO VOTE: JOHN R. LEWIS ACT

The *Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act*, improves access to the ballot for all Americans, advances commonsense election integrity reforms, protects our democracy from emerging threats, restores the Voting Rights Act to its full force, and protects the rights of Native American voters by addressing barriers faced by voters living on tribal lands. The bill also puts an end to partisan gerrymandering, and roots out the undue influence of dark, special interest money in our politics, giving the voice back to the American people.

DIVISION A – VOTER ACCESS

- **Modernizes voter registration opportunities** by implementing automatic voter registration at State Department of Motor Vehicle offices; ensures voters in all states have access to online voter registration; and ensures all voters have access to same day voter registration opportunities.
- Makes Election Day a **public holiday**.
- **Sets minimum, nationwide standards for voting opportunities** by setting a uniform floor of days and hours for early voting; setting minimum standards for access to ballot drop boxes; a nationwide standard of no-excuse absentee voting; and improves delivery of election mail.
- **Strengthens protections for voters to ensure their ballot is counted** by creating notice and due process requirements before a voter’s mail-in ballot can be disqualified.
- **Promotes voter confidence** by setting uniform standards for states that require voter identification to vote; strengthens voter list maintenance standards by requiring that the removal of voters from the rolls is done on the basis of reliable and objective evidence and prohibits the use of returned mail sent by third parties to remove voters.
- **Ensures every citizen has the right to vote** by restoring the right to vote in Federal elections for people who have served their time for felony convictions and are no longer incarcerated.
- Provides standards for **voter identification**, which require uniform national standard for states that require identification for in-person voting and allows voters to present a broad set of identification cards and documents in hard copy and digital form.
- **Improves access for voters with disabilities, military, and overseas voters.**

DIVISION B – ELECTION INTEGRITY

- **Prevents State election subversion** by establishing Federal protections to insulate non-partisan election officials who administer Federal elections from undue partisan interference or control.
- **Protects election records, election infrastructure, and ballot tabulation** by strengthening protections for Federal election records and election infrastructure in order to protect the integrity and security of ballots and voting systems.

- **Implements voter-verified paper ballots, reliable audits, and voting system upgrades** by requiring states to use voting systems that use paper ballots that can be verified by voters and to implement reliable post-election audits. The bill also provides grants for states to purchase new and more secure voting systems and make cybersecurity improvements.
- **Improves non-partisan election official recruitment and training** by tasking the Election Assistance Commission with developing model training programs to recruit a new generation of election workers and provides dedicated grants for training and recruitment.
- **Implements comprehensive voting system security protections** by putting in place election vendor cybersecurity standards, including standards for manufacturing and assembling voting machines, among other key security measures.
- **Establishes a duty to report foreign election interference** by creating a reporting requirement for federal campaigns to disclose certain foreign contacts.
- **Protects the right to vote** by establishing due process standards for curing provisional ballots and standards for counting of provisional ballots, and setting forth a right to vote for all Americans.

DIVISION C – CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

- **Ensures every American has an equal voice in our democracy** by ending partisan gerrymandering and establishing specific criteria for congressional redistricting to ensure non-partisan redistricting.
- **Combats secret money and election interference (*DISCLOSE Act and Honest Ads Act*)** by requiring super PACs, 501(c)(4) groups, and other organizations spending money in elections to disclose donors and shuts down the use of transfers between organizations to cloak the identity of contributors. Ensures that political ads sold online have the same transparency and disclosure requirements as ads sold on TV, radio, and satellite.
- **Establishes a State Election Assistance & Innovation Fund** to finance state investments in democracy-promotion activities. Establishes a self-sustaining fund to finance critical investments in state-led innovations for our democracy and election infrastructure. The fund is financed through an additional assessment paid on federal fines, penalties, and settlements for certain tax crimes and corporate malfeasance. States would be allotted an annual distribution for eligible democracy and election-related investments. States could select to access their full distribution or a partial distribution, or roll over their distribution for future use.

DIVISION D – VOTING RIGHTS

- **Restores the full force of the Voting Rights Act** by incorporating the *John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act*, which addresses the Supreme Court’s decisions in *Brnovich v. DNC* and *Shelby County v. Holder* by codifying and updating the tests for vote dilution, denial, and abridgement claims under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act,

and establishing new geographic and practice-based preclearance regimes.

- **Protects ballot tabulation, election workers, and polling places** by amending Sections 11 and 12 of the VRA to expand the list of prohibited acts under the VRA—specifically, it adds a prohibition on any person acting under color of law from (1) willfully failing or refusing to tabulate, count, and report votes; or (2) willfully failing or refusing to certify the aggregate tabulations of votes or certify the election of candidates receiving sufficient votes to be elected to office; aligns existing prohibitions against destroying, defacing, or altering ballots or voting records with temporal requirements for record retention; and incorporates the *Election Worker and Polling Place Protection Act*, which expands and clarifies protections for election workers, polling places, and other election infrastructure against threats, harassment, and violence.
- **Protects the voting rights of Native Americans** by incorporating the *Frank Harrison, Elizabeth Peratrovich, and Miguel Trujillo Native American Voting Rights Act of 2021*, which establishes a Native American Voting Task Force grant program; improves voter registration opportunities on Indian lands; sets minimum standards for access to early voting, drop box, and polling place opportunities on Indian lands; ensures tribal IDs are accepted as valid IDs for the purposes of voting; and creates tribal administrative review procedures for reviewing the removal of polling places and voter registration sites on Indian lands, among additional protections.