

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 854

Designating September 2026 as “National Voting Rights Month”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Ms. ALSOBROOKS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. COONS, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHIFF, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SMITH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Designating September 2026 as “National Voting Rights Month”.

Whereas voting is 1 of the single most important rights that can be exercised in a democracy;

Whereas, over the course of history, various voter suppression laws in the United States have hindered, and even prohibited, certain individuals and groups from exercising the right to vote;

Whereas, during the 19th and early 20th centuries, Native Americans and people who were born to United States citizens abroad, people who spoke a language other than

English, and people who were formerly subjected to slavery were denied full citizenship and prevented from voting by English literacy tests;

Whereas, since the 1870s, minority groups such as Black Americans in the South have suffered from the oppressive effects of Jim Crow laws that were designed to prevent political, economic, and social mobility;

Whereas Black Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and other underrepresented voters were subject to violence, poll taxes, literacy tests, all-White primaries, property ownership tests, and grandfather clauses that were designed to suppress the right of those underrepresented individuals to vote;

Whereas, as of 2024, 4,000,000 people in the United States were disenfranchised from voting because of a felony conviction, including 1 in 16 Black adults, due to the shameful entanglement of racial injustice in the criminal legal system and voting access in the United States;

Whereas members of the aforementioned groups and others are currently, in some cases, subject to intimidation, voter roll purges, and financial barriers that act effectively as modern-day poll taxes;

Whereas, in 1965, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.) to protect the right of Black Americans and other traditionally disenfranchised groups to vote, among other reasons;

Whereas, in 2013, in the landmark case of *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 529 (2013), the Supreme Court of the United States invalidated section 4 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10303), dismantling the preclearance formula provision in that Act that protected

voters in States and localities that historically have suppressed the right of minorities to vote;

Whereas, since the invalidation of the preclearance formula provision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.), gerrymandered districts in many States have gone unchallenged and have become less likely to be invalidated by the courts;

Whereas gerrymandered districts in many States have been found to have a discriminatory impact on traditionally disenfranchised minorities through tactics that include “cracking”, diluting the voting power of minorities across many districts, and “packing”, concentrating the power of minority voters into 1 district to reduce their voting power in other districts;

Whereas some States have implemented new voting restrictions that make it more difficult to vote, including cut-backs in early voting, voter roll purges, placement of faulty equipment in minority communities, requirement of photo identification, and the elimination of same-day registration;

Whereas these policies could outright disenfranchise or make voting much more difficult for more than 80,000,000 minority, elderly, poor, and disabled voters, among other groups;

Whereas, in 2016, discriminatory laws in North Carolina, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and Texas were ruled to violate the rights of voters and were overturned by the courts;

Whereas the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in *Shelby County v. Holder* calls on Congress to

update the formula in the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.);

Whereas, on April 29, 2026, the Supreme Court of the United States, in *Louisiana v. Callais*, 608 U.S. _____ (2026), significantly narrowed section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301), holding that Louisiana engaged in an unconstitutional racial gerrymander when it created a second majority-Black congressional district to comply with section 2 and requiring future challengers to show that a State intentionally discriminated against minority voters, a far higher bar than courts had previously required;

Whereas Justice Kagan warned in her dissent in *Louisiana v. Callais* that the decision renders section 2 “all but a dead letter” as a tool for protecting minority voters from vote dilution;

Whereas, beginning in 2025 and continuing into 2026, legislatures and commissions in States including Texas, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Florida, Tennessee, Alabama, and Louisiana have enacted new congressional maps mid-decade, outside the normal post-census redistricting cycle;

Whereas these maps have specifically targeted districts held by Black and other minority Members of Congress;

Whereas these efforts, emboldened by the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States in *Shelby County v. Holder* and *Louisiana v. Callais*, face fewer legal checks against racial vote dilution than at any point since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.), underscoring the urgent need for Congress to restore and strengthen its protections;

Whereas Congress must work to combat any attempts to dismantle or underfund the United States Postal Service or obstruct the passage of the mail as blatant tactics of voter suppression and election interference;

Whereas the Trump Administration has repeatedly attempted to restrict voter registration and access to the ballot, including vote-by-mail, for eligible citizens of the United States;

Whereas the Department of Justice has launched unprecedented lawsuits against at least 30 States and the District of Columbia to force them to turn over their voter registration lists and Federal courts have repeatedly dismissed these Department of Justice lawsuits as meritless;

Whereas there is much more work to be done to ensure all citizens of the United States have the right to vote through free, fair, and accessible elections, and Congress must exercise its constitutional authority to protect the right to vote;

Whereas National Voter Registration Day in 2026 is Tuesday, September 15; and

Whereas September 2026 would be an appropriate month—

(1) to designate as “National Voting Rights Month”;

and

(2) to ensure that, through the registration of voters and awareness of elections, the democracy of the United States includes all citizens of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates September 2026 as “National

3 Voting Rights Month”;

1 (2) encourages all people in the United States
2 to uphold the right of every citizen to exercise the
3 sacred and fundamental right to vote;

4 (3) encourages Congress to pass—

5 (A) the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Ad-
6 vancement Act of 2025 (S. 2523, H.R. 14,
7 119th Congress), to strengthen protections for
8 voters by restoring and modernizing key protec-
9 tions in the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52
10 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.) to prevent discriminatory
11 gerrymandering and to ensure minority voting
12 rights are safeguarded; and

13 (B) other voting rights legislation that
14 seeks to advance voting rights and protect elec-
15 tions in the United States;

16 (4) encourages Congress to oppose the Safe-
17 guard American Voter Eligibility Act (S. 3752, H.R.
18 7296, 119th Congress), which could block millions of
19 citizens of the United States from casting their vote;

20 (5) recommends that public schools and univer-
21 sities in the United States develop an academic cur-
22 riculum that educates students about—

23 (A) the importance of voting, how to reg-
24 ister to vote, where to vote, and the different
25 forms of voting;

1 (B) the history of voter suppression in the
2 United States before and after passage of the
3 Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et
4 seq.); and

5 (C) current measures that have been taken
6 to restrict the vote;

7 (6) expresses appreciation for the United States
8 Postal Service having issued a special Representative
9 John R. Lewis stamp on September 19, 2023—

10 (A) to honor the life and legacy of Rep-
11 resentative John R. Lewis in supporting voting
12 rights; and

13 (B) to remind people in the United States
14 that ordinary citizens risked their lives,
15 marched, and participated in the great democ-
16 racy of the United States so that all citizens
17 would have the fundamental right to vote; and

18 (7) invites Congress to allocate the requisite
19 funds for public service announcements on television,
20 radio, newspapers, magazines, social media, bill-
21 boards, buses, and other forms of media—

22 (A) to remind people in the United States
23 when elections are being held;

24 (B) to share important registration dead-
25 lines; and

1 (C) to urge people to get out and vote.

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