Public Law 94-73
94th Congress

An Act

Aug. 6, 1975
[H.R. 6219]

To amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to extend certain provisions for an additional seven years, to make permanent the ban against certain prerequisites to voting, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Voting Rights Act of 1965, amendments.

TITLE I

42 USC 1973b.

SEC. 101. Section 4(a) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is amended by striking out "ten" each time it appears and inserting in lieu thereof "seventeen".

42 USC 1973aa.

SEC. 102. Section 201(a) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is amended by—

(1) striking out "Prior to August 6, 1975, no" and inserting "No" in lieu thereof; and

(2) striking out "as to which the provisions of section 4(a) of this Act are not in effect by reason of determinations made under section 4(b) of this Act." and inserting in lieu thereof a period.

TITLE II

Tests or devices, suspension.
42 USC 1973b.

SEC. 201. Section 4(a) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is amended by—

(1) inserting immediately after "determinations have been made under" the following: "the first two sentences of";

(2) adding at the end of the first paragraph thereof the following new sentence: "No citizen shall be denied the right to vote in any Federal, State, or local election because of his failure to comply with any test or device in any State with respect to which the determinations have been made under the third sentence of subsection (b) of this section or in any political subdivision with respect to which such determinations have been made as a separate unit, unless the United States District Court for the District of Columbia in an action for a declaratory judgment brought by such State or subdivision against the United States has determined that no such test or device has been used during the ten years preceding the filing of the action for the purpose or with the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race or color, or in contravention of the guarantees set forth in section 4(f)(2): *Provided*, That no such declaratory judgment shall issue with respect to any plaintiff for a period of ten years after the entry of a final judgment of any court of the United States, other than the denial of a declaratory judgment under this section, whether entered prior to or after the enactment of this paragraph, determining that denials or abridgments of the right to vote on account of race or color, or in contravention of the guarantees set forth in section 4(f)(2) through the use of tests or devices have occurred anywhere in the territory of such plaintiff.";

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(3) striking out "the action" in the third paragraph thereof, and by inserting in lieu thereof "an action under the first sentence of this subsection"; and

(4) inserting immediately after the third paragraph thereof the following new paragraph:

"If the Attorney General determines that he has no reason to believe that any such test or device has been used during the ten years preceding the filing of an action under the second sentence of this subsection for the purpose or with the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race or color, or in contravention of the guarantees set forth in section 4(f)(2), he shall consent to the entry of such judgment.".

SEC. 202. Section 4(b) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is amended by adding at the end of the first paragraph thereof the following: "On and after August 6, 1975, in addition to any State or political subdivision of a State determined to be subject to subsection (a) pursuant to the previous two sentences, the provisions of subsection (a) shall apply in any State or any political subdivision of a State which (i) the Attorney General determines maintained on November 1, 1972, any test or device, and with respect to which (ii) the Director of the Census determines that less than 50 per centum of the citizens of voting age were registered on November 1, 1972, or that less than 50 per centum of such persons voted in the Presidential election of November 1972.". 42 USC 1973b.

SEC. 203. Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is amended by adding the following new subsection: Language minorities. 42 USC 1973b.

"(f)(1) The Congress finds that voting discrimination against citizens of language minorities is pervasive and national in scope. Such minority citizens are from environments in which the dominant language is other than English. In addition they have been denied equal educational opportunities by State and local governments, resulting in severe disabilities and continuing illiteracy in the English language. The Congress further finds that, where State and local officials conduct elections only in English, language minority citizens are excluded from participating in the electoral process. In many areas of the country, this exclusion is aggravated by acts of physical, economic, and political intimidation. The Congress declares that, in order to enforce the guarantees of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the United States Constitution, it is necessary to eliminate such discrimination by prohibiting English-only elections, and by prescribing other remedial devices. USC prec. title 1.

"(2) No voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure shall be imposed or applied by any State or political subdivision to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote because he is a member of a language minority group.

"(3) In addition to the meaning given the term under section 4(c), the term 'test or device' shall also mean any practice or requirement by which any State or political subdivision provided any registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, only in the English language, where the Director of the Census determines that more than five per centum of the citizens of voting age residing "Test or device."

in such State or political subdivision are members of a single language minority. With respect to section 4(b), the term 'test or device', as defined in this subsection, shall be employed only in making the determinations under the third sentence of that subsection.

42 USC 1973b.

"(4) Whenever any State or political subdivision subject to the prohibitions of the second sentence of section 4(a) provides any registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, it shall provide them in the language of the applicable language minority group as well as in the English language: *Provided*, That where the language of the applicable minority group is oral or unwritten, the State or political subdivision is only required to furnish oral instructions, assistance, or other information relating to registration and voting.".

42 USC 1973c.

SEC. 204. Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is amended by inserting after "November 1, 1968," the following: "or whenever a State or political subdivision with respect to which the prohibitions set forth in section 4(a) based upon determinations made under the third sentence of section 4(b) are in effect shall enact or seek to administer any voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting different from that in force or effect on November 1, 1972,".

42 USC 1973a, 1973d.

SEC. 205. Sections 3 and 6 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 are each amended by striking out "fifteenth amendment" each time it appears and inserting in lieu thereof "fourteenth or fifteenth amendment".

42 USC 1973-1973d, 1973k.

SEC. 206. Sections 2, 3, the second paragraph of section 4(a), and sections 4(d), 5, 6, and 13 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 are each amended by adding immediately after "on account of race or color" each time it appears the following: ", or in contravention of the guarantees set forth in section 4(f)(2)".

"Language minorities," "language minority group." 42 USC 1973*l*.

SEC. 207. Section 14(c) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(3) The term 'language minorities' or 'language minority group' means persons who are American Indian, Asian American, Alaskan Natives or of Spanish heritage.".

Severability. 42 USC 1973 note.

SEC. 208. If any amendments made by this Act or the application of any provision thereof to any person or circumstance is judicially determined to be invalid, the remainder of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, or the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected by such determination.

TITLE III

42 USC 1973aa-1.

SEC. 301. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is amended by inserting the following new section immediately after section 202:

"BILINGUAL ELECTION REQUIREMENTS

42 USC 1973aa-1a.

"SEC. 203. (a) The Congress finds that, through the use of various practices and procedures, citizens of language minorities have been effectively excluded from participation in the electoral process. Among other factors, the denial of the right to vote of such minority group citizens is ordinarily directly related to the unequal educational

opportunities afforded them, resulting in high illiteracy and low voting participation. The Congress declares that, in order to enforce the guarantees of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the United States Constitution, it is necessary to eliminate such discrimination by prohibiting these practices, and by prescribing other remedial devices.

USC prec. title 1.

"(b) Prior to August 6, 1985, no State or political subdivision shall provide registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, only in the English language if the Director of the Census determines (i) that more than 5 percent of the citizens of voting age of such State or political subdivision are members of a single language minority and (ii) that the illiteracy rate of such persons as a group is higher than the national illiteracy rate: *Provided*, That the prohibitions of this subsection shall not apply in any political subdivision which has less than five percent voting age citizens of each language minority which comprises over five percent of the statewide population of voting age citizens. For purposes of this subsection, illiteracy means the failure to complete the fifth primary grade. The determinations of the Director of the Census under this subsection shall be effective upon publication in the Federal Register and shall not be subject to review in any court.

"Illiteracy."
Publication in Federal Register.

"(c) Whenever any State or political subdivision subject to the prohibition of subsection (b) of this section provides any registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, it shall provide them in the language of the applicable minority group as well as in the English language: *Provided*, That where the language of the applicable minority group is oral or unwritten or in the case of Alaskan natives, if the predominant language is historically unwritten, the State or political subdivision is only required to furnish oral instructions, assistance, or other information relating to registration and voting.

"(d) Any State or political subdivision subject to the prohibition of subsection (b) of this section, which seeks to provide English-only registration or voting materials or information, including ballots, may file an action against the United States in the United States District Court for a declaratory judgment permitting such provision. The court shall grant the requested relief if it determines that the illiteracy rate of the applicable language minority group within the State or political subdivision is equal to or less than the national illiteracy rate.

"(e) For purposes of this section, the term 'language minorities' or 'language minority group' means persons who are American Indian, Asian American, Alaskan Natives, or of Spanish heritage."

"Language minorities," "language minority groups."

SEC. 302. Sections 203, 204, and 205 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, are redesignated as 204, 205, and 206, respectively.

42 USC 1973aa-2, 1973aa-3, 1973aa-4.

SEC. 303. Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as redesignated section 204 by section 302 of this Act, is amended by inserting immediately after "in violation of section 202," the following: "or 203,".

42 USC 1973aa-2.

SEC. 304. Section 204 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as redesignated section 205 by section 302 of this Act, is amended by striking out "or 202" and inserting in lieu thereof ", 202, or 203".

42 USC 1973aa-3.

TITLE IV

42 USC 1973a.

SEC. 401. Section 3 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is amended by striking out "Attorney General" the first three times it appears and inserting in lieu thereof the following "Attorney General or an aggrieved person".

Attorney's fees.
42 USC 1973l.

SEC. 402. Section 14 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is amended by adding at the end thereof the following new subsection:

"(e) In any action or proceeding to enforce the voting guarantees of the fourteenth or fifteenth amendment, the court, in its discretion, may allow the prevailing party, other than the United States, a reasonable attorney's fee as part of the costs.".

Survey.
42 USC 1973aa.
42 USC 1973aa-5.

SEC. 403. Title II of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is amended by adding at the end thereof the following new section:

"SEC. 207. (a) Congress hereby directs the Director of the Census forthwith to conduct a survey to compile registration and voting statistics: (i) in every State or political subdivision with respect to which the prohibitions of section 4(a) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 are in effect, for every statewide general election for Members of the United States House of Representatives after January 1, 1974; and (ii) in every State or political subdivision for any election designated by the United States Commission on Civil Rights. Such surveys shall only include a count of citizens of voting age, race or color, and national origin, and a determination of the extent to which such persons are registered to vote and have voted in the elections surveyed.

42 USC 1973b.

"(b) In any survey under subsection (a) of this section no person shall be compelled to disclose his race, color, national origin, political party affiliation, or how he voted (or the reasons therefor), nor shall any penalty be imposed for his failure or refusal to make such disclosures. Every person interrogated orally, by written survey or questionnaire, or by any other means with respect to such information shall be fully advised of his right to fail or refuse to furnish such information.

Report to Congress.

"(c) The Director of the Census shall, at the earliest practicable time, report to the Congress the results of every survey conducted pursuant to the provisions of subsection (a) of this section.

13 USC 9, 211.

"(d) The provisions of section 9 and chapter 7 of title 13 of the United States Code shall apply to any survey, collection, or compilation of registration and voting statistics carried out under subsection (a) of this section."

42 USC 1973i.

SEC. 404. Section 11(c) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is amended by inserting after "Columbia," the following words: "Guam, or the Virgin Islands,".

42 USC 1973c.

SEC. 405. Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is amended—

(1) by striking out "except that neither" and inserting in lieu thereof the following: "or upon good cause shown, to facilitate an expedited approval within sixty days after such submission, the Attorney General has affirmatively indicated that such objection will not be made. Neither an affirmative indication by the Attorney General that no objection will be made, nor";

(2) by placing after the words "failure to object" a comma; and

(3) by inserting immediately before the final sentence thereof the following: "In the event the Attorney General affirmatively indicates that no objection will be made within the sixty-day period following receipt of a submission, the Attorney General may reserve the right to reexamine the submission if additional information comes to his attention during the remainder of the sixty-day period which would otherwise require objection in accordance with this section.".

SEC. 406. Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as redesignated 204 by section 302 of this Act, is amended by striking out "section 2282 of title 28" and inserting "section 2284 of title 28" in lieu thereof. 42 USC 1973aa-2.

SEC. 407. Title III of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is amended to read as follows:

"TITLE III—EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD VOTING AGE

"ENFORCEMENT OF TWENTY-SIXTH AMENDMENT

"SEC. 301. (a) (1) The Attorney General is directed to institute, in the name of the United States, such actions against States or political subdivisions, including actions for injunctive relief, as he may determine to be necessary to implement the twenty-sixth article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States. 42 USC 1973bb. USC prec. title 1.

"(2) The district courts of the United States shall have jurisdiction of proceedings instituted under this title, which shall be heard and determined by a court of three judges in accordance with section 2284 of title 28 of the United States Code, and any appeal shall lie to the Supreme Court. It shall be the duty of the judges designated to hear the case to assign the case for hearing and determination thereof, and to cause the case to be in every way expedited. Jurisdiction.

"(b) Whoever shall deny or attempt to deny any person of any right secured by the twenty-sixth article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States shall be fined not more than $5,000 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both. Penalty.

"DEFINITION

"SEC. 302. As used in this title, the term 'State' includes the District of Columbia.". 42 USC 1973bb-1.

SEC. 408. Section 10 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is amended— 42 USC 1973h.

(1) by striking out subsection (d);

(2) in subsection (b), by inserting "and section 2 of the twenty-fourth amendment" immediately after "fifteenth amendment"; and

(3) by striking out "and" the first time it appears in subsection (b), and inserting in lieu thereof a comma.

SEC. 409. Section 11 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection: Penalty. 42 USC 1973i.

"(e) (1) Whoever votes more than once in an election referred to in paragraph (2) shall be fined not more than $10,000 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

"(2) The prohibition of this subsection applies with respect to any general, special, or primary election held solely or in part for the purpose of selecting or electing any candidate for the office of President, Vice President, presidential elector, Member of the United States Senate, Member of the United States House of Representatives, Delegate from the District of Columbia, Guam, or the Virgin Islands, or Resident Commissioner of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

"Votes more than once."

"(3) As used in this subsection, the term 'votes more than once' does not include the casting of an additional ballot if all prior ballots of that voter were invalidated, nor does it include the voting in two jurisdictions under section 202 of this Act, to the extent two ballots are not cast for an election to the same candidacy or office."

42 USC 1973aa-1.

42 USC 1973a.

SEC. 410. Section 3 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is amended by inserting immediately before "guarantees" each time it appears the following "voting".

Approved August 6, 1975.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

HOUSE REPORT No. 94-196 (Comm. on the Judiciary).
SENATE REPORT No. 94-295 accompanying S. 1279 (Comm. on the Judiciary).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 121 (1975):
June 2-4, considered and passed House.
July 21-24 considered and passed Senate, amended.
July 28, House agreed to Senate amendments.
WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 11, No. 32:
Aug. 6, Presidential statement.