



December 3, 2020

## SUPPORT THE FOR THE PEOPLE ACT

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 220 national organizations committed to promoting and protecting the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, we write to urge you to pass the For the People Act early in the next Congress.

The For the People Act represents a transformative vision for American democracy. It would create a democracy that welcomes every eligible voter's chance to participate in civic life, and a democracy that demands integrity, fairness, and transparency in our nation's elections. For far too long, voter suppression has been a shameful reality in our country – undercutting the power and representation of African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, people with disabilities, and other communities historically excluded from our political process. The ability to meaningfully participate in our democracy is a racial justice issue. It is a civil rights issue. And the need for legislative action is urgent.

The numerous hurdles that voters faced during the pandemic-plagued 2020 election cycle – exacerbated by the relentless efforts by President Trump to undermine election integrity and impose barriers to the ballot box – reinforced this urgent need. The historic voter turnout in the November election despite these challenges demonstrated the determination and resilience of the American people.

Not every flaw in our democracy can be easily fixed, but there are strong and ready solutions to many of our most significant voting problems. The For the People Act would establish uniform national standards for elections, including automatic and same-day voter registration, a minimum of two weeks of early voting, expanded vote-by-mail, and the elimination of felony disenfranchisement laws. The House of Representatives passed the For the People Act in March 2019, and we are pleased that Speaker Pelosi has committed to making this bill the first order of business in the new Congress.

The For the People Act provides a North Star for the democracy reform agenda. It is a bold, comprehensive reform package that offers solutions to a broken democracy. Repairing and modernizing our voting system goes hand in hand with reforms that address the rampant corruption flowing from the corrosive power of money in our elections, and reforms that address the myriad ethical problems that plague all three branches of the federal government. The reforms in the For the People Act are necessary to advance racial justice and ensure that our government works for all people, not just a powerful few.

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In addition, Congress must pass two other essential racial justice and democracy reform bills: the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act – which would restore a critical provision of the Voting Rights Act gutted by the Supreme Court’s infamous 2013 *Shelby County v. Holder* decision – and the Washington, D.C. Admission Act, which would grant long overdue statehood status to the nation’s capital.

Shortly before his death earlier this year, civil rights icon John Lewis stated: “In our country, the right to vote is precious – almost sacred. Countless people marched and protested for this right. Some gave a little blood, and far too many lost their lives. Around the globe, generations of U.S. officials boasted of this legacy and progress. Today, the world is horrified in watching Americans – especially people of color – once again stand in immovable lines and experience undeniable, targeted, systematic barriers to democracy.... Time is of the essence to preserve the integrity and promises of our democracy.”

Congress and the Biden administration must heed his call. As the 2020 election cycle made painfully clear, we must address this crisis and enact transformational change to build a democracy that works for everyone. The civil and human rights coalition is strongly committed to expanding the franchise and fixing our democracy, and we urge both chambers of Congress to pass the For the People Act early in the new Congress. Safeguarding our democracy should not be a partisan issue.

Sincerely,



Vanita Gupta  
President and CEO



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Executive Vice President for Government Affairs