



January 26, 2021

RE: Recommended Vote in Favor of H.R. 1, the For the People Act of 2021

Dear Members of the U.S. House of Representatives:

Co-Chairs
Thomas L. Sager
Hon. Shira Scheindlin

Secretary
Eleanor H. Smith

Treasurer
David Smith

General Counsel
Nicholas T. Christakos

*President and
Executive Director*
Kristen Clarke

On behalf of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, a non-partisan civil rights organization formed at the request of President John F. Kennedy to enlist the private bar's leadership and resources in combating racial discrimination and securing equal justice under law, we write to urge you to vote in favor of H.R. 1, the For the People Act of 2021 and to oppose any Motion to Recommit.

H.R. 1 is a bold step forward for our democracy. It would modernize our election system, increase participation, and substantially reduce many of the challenges faced by voters in the 2020 election and prior elections. Through our substantial national voting rights litigation and our leadership of the national, non-partisan Election Protection coalition, the Lawyers' Committee has seen the challenges voters faced in the 2020 election firsthand. Our national 866-OUR-VOTE hotline received over 200,000 calls from voters who needed assistance addressing problems such as long lines and late openings. These problems were myriad and included under-staffing and poor training of poll workers, ballot shortages and machine malfunctions, problems with voter registration, challenges with receipt and return absentee ballots, overuse of provisional ballots, lack of voter assistance, and intimidation and deceptive practices.

H.R. 1 is a critically important bill that would greatly improve the voting process for all eligible Americans. It would expand automatic voter registration and online registration to ensure that registering to vote is accessible and not a barrier to voting, and strengthen voting by mail and early voting to provide every American with the opportunity to conveniently cast a ballot. The bill would combat voter intimidation and voter suppression with provisions to prevent voter purges and voter caging, two of the primary methods used to improperly eliminate voters from the voter rolls. H.R. 1 would also require states to provide same-day registration, a key provision that will ensure that otherwise eligible voters are able to participate in federal elections even if they have moved within the state to a new county, have been purged from the voter rolls for inactivity, or have been unable to register to vote by the state mandated deadline.

Further, H.R. 1 would address serious shortcomings in election administration that have prevented far too many Americans from participating in the democratic process. It would require early voting sites to be located near public transportation, a step that would make voting more accessible to many Americans who have no other means of transportation. The bill would also require states to notify individuals at least a week before an election if their polling place has changed. This common-sense reform would protect voters from losing their opportunity to vote because they did not know their correct polling location.

H.R. 1 would also promote equal justice for all by restoring the right to vote for Americans who have completed their felony sentence (including individuals on probation

or parole) but have been denied the right to vote. Over 5 million Americans would be enfranchised by this provision of H.R. 1. In addition to this restoration of voting rights, H.R. 1 would affirm the need for statehood for Washington, D.C. to enfranchise the 705,000 residents of the District.

The Lawyers' Committee strongly endorses H.R. 1 and urges every member of Congress to support this legislation. H.R. 1 would help make the right to vote a reality for millions of Americans who have been disfranchised by flaws in our nation's voting laws and procedures, or subject to pernicious voter suppression tactics.

Thank you for your leadership in protecting the fundamental right to vote and our democracy by voting for H.R. 1, the For the People Act of 2021, and by opposing any Motion to Recommit.

If you have any questions, please contact Kadeem Cooper, Policy Counsel (kcooper@lawyerscommittee.org) at 202-662-8600.

Sincerely,



Damon Hewitt
Interim President & Executive Director
The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law



Kadeem Cooper
Policy Counsel
The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law