

LET FLORIDA VOTE

VOTING IS THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR DEMOCRACY. EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXERCISE THEIR VOICE AT THE BALLOT BOX.

The ACLU of Florida strives to expand and protect voting rights across Florida in the courts and in the streets. While politicians across the country pass laws to suppress voting rights by creating barriers to registration, implementing cutbacks on early voting, and enacting strict voter identification requirements, the fight for voting rights remains as critical as ever. We must combat these attacks on Floridians' right to meaningfully participate in our democracy.

Voter suppression among communities of color, students, disabled people, and the elderly. After the Civil War, Florida and other Confederate states developed endless schemes to keep Black people from voting by enacting Jim Crow laws. Those machinations included literacy tests, poll taxes, unfair residency requirements, and Black Codes.

We envision a state where all people have equal access to make their voices heard at the ballot box.

YOUR ABILITY TO VOTE SHOULD NOT BE BASED ON THE SIZE OF YOUR BANK ACCOUNT.

In November 2018, with 65% of Floridians' approval, Florida adopted Amendment 4, which automatically restored voting rights to eligible returning citizens. Amendment 4's adoption signaled Florida's intent to end lifetime disenfranchisement for most returning citizens.

Amendment 4 is clear: when your sentence is finished your voting rights are restored and you may register and vote. Approximately 1.4 million returning citizens should have the right to vote in Florida thanks to the passage of Amendment 4. This historic occasion is the greatest expansion of voting rights in the U.S. since the 26th Amendment lowered the voting age to 18.

In 2019, Florida's legislature passed, and the governor signed into law, a bill designed to nullify Amendment 4 and undermine the will of the more than 5 million voters who approved Amendment 4. The new law, SB7066, punishes people based on their wealth by forcing those with past felony convictions to pay all their legal financial obligations *before* their voting rights are restored. Ordinarily, courts assess crippling legal financial obligations that most simply cannot pay after they complete their sentence. SB7066 disenfranchises most of those whose right to vote was restored by Amendment 4. This poll tax violates the U.S. Constitution. In response, the ACLU of Florida and partners filed a lawsuit challenging this unconstitutional law. Poll taxes are indisputably illegal and have been for decades.

The ACLU of Florida is committed to invalidating this poll tax law, SB7066, and to ensuring all Floridians whose rights were restored under Amendment 4 have the ability to register and vote.



THE STATE OF FLORIDA, SHOULD GUARANTEE THE GREATEST ACCESS TO THE POLLS FOR ALL ELIGIBLE VOTERS.

In Florida, simple local election administration reforms can ensure that every single eligible voter has access to the ballot box. Floridians lead busy lives and need early voting sites open as many days, and for as many hours as possible in accordance with Florida statutes.

Increasing early voting across the state is one way Florida can ensure more participation in elections. State lawmakers should create a schedule of early voting days and early voting hours – preferably starting two weeks before an election – and apply them uniformly throughout Florida. In the absence of such legislation, county supervisors of elections should maximize access to the ballot box through expansive early voting schedules.

Florida should work to encourage participation by students and young people by placing polling places on

college and university campuses. We should provide funding to county supervisors of elections to ensure that polling places are located to provide easy access to all voters. Special attention must be paid to providing voting sites in communities serving disabled people, people of color, and students, all of whom have historically been denied equal access to polling places.

Additionally, Florida should reform its handling of vote-by-mail ballot rejections. It should create uniform standards for processing vote-by-mail ballots, including rules that standardize when such ballots must and must not be rejected for mis-matched signatures. Arbitrary rejection of vote-by-mail ballots must stop. Thousands of vote-by-mail ballots are discarded every election due to arbitrary decisions about signatures made county-by-county.

FLORIDA SHOULD FOLLOW THE LEAD OF OTHER STATES AND EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL FLORIDIANS TO REGISTER AND VOTE.

Unlike many other states, Florida prohibits qualified voters from registering and voting on Election Day and has no system to facilitate voter registration when a person obtains a driver's license, state-issued ID card or registers a car. All eligible Floridians should be able to register and vote on Election Day.

Across the board, people participate more in states that have Election Day registration than this purely arbitrary, bureaucratic red tape of a deadline. Floridians need the same access to the ballot box as citizens from other states.

The ACLU of Florida is committed to ensuring Floridians are able to register to vote on Election Day.

TO ENSURE ALL FLORIDIANS HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO THE BALLOT BOX, THE ACLU OF FLORIDA IS COMMITTED TO:

Invalidate the poll tax law, SB7066, and ensuring all 1.4 million Floridians are able to register and vote in Florida by:

- Invalidating the 2019 restrictive law.
- Maximizing the number of Floridians eligible to vote under Amendment 4.
- Reaching out to directly impacted people to alert them of their voter registration eligibility and status.

Securing local reforms that improve election administration and voter protection by:

- Expanding early voting.
- Reforming the signature matching process.
- Selecting polling places that are genuinely accessible by Florida's diverse population.

Expanding voting rights and participation in elections through passage of a statute or constitutional amendment adopting Election Day registration.

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