

115TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. RES. 626

Designating September 2018 as “National Voting Rights Month”.

---

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 12, 2018

Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. UDALL, Mr. COONS, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. CARPER, Ms. SMITH, and Mr. BOOKER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration

---

## RESOLUTION

Designating September 2018 as “National Voting Rights Month”.

Whereas voting is one 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 slav-

ery were denied full citizenship and prevented from voting by English literacy tests;

Whereas from 1954 to 1968, minority groups such as African Americans in the South suffered from the oppressive effects of Jim Crow laws designed to prevent political, economic, and social mobility;

Whereas African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and other underrepresented voters were subject to violence at polling stations, poll taxes, literacy tests, all-White primaries, property ownership tests, grandfather clauses, voter roll purges, and laws that prevented former prisoners from voting;

Whereas Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.) to protect the rights of African Americans and other traditionally disenfranchised groups to vote;

Whereas in 2013, the Supreme Court invalidated section 4 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, dismantling the preclearance formula provision in that Act that protected voters in States that historically have suppressed the right of minorities to vote;

Whereas, since the invalidation of the preclearance formula provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, gerrymandered districts in many States have gone unchallenged or have become less likely to be invalidated by the courts;

Whereas gerrymandering has a discriminatory impact on traditionally disenfranchised minorities, including by—

(1) diluting the voting power of minorities across many districts (known as “cracking”); and

(2) concentrating the voting power of minorities in 1 district to reduce the voting power of minorities in other districts (known as “packing”);

Whereas the courts have found that the congressional and, in some cases, State legislative district maps, in Texas, North Carolina, Florida, and Wisconsin were gerrymandered with the intent of interfering with the constitutional right to vote;

Whereas the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 529 (2013), calls on Congress to fix the formula in the Voting Rights Act of 1965;

Whereas some form of a restrictive voting law has been instituted in 33 States since 2013;

Whereas restrictive voting laws have resulted in cutbacks in early voting, voter roll purges, placement of faulty equipment in minority communities, a requirement of photo identification, the procurement of which amounts to a modern day poll tax, and the elimination of same-day registration;

Whereas more than 80,000,000 minority, elderly, poor, and disabled voters could be disenfranchised by restrictive voting laws;

Whereas in 2016, discriminatory laws in North Carolina, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and Texas have been ruled unconstitutional and overturned by the courts;

Whereas there are local elected officials who refuse to adhere to Federal court decisions that have struck down suppressive voting laws instituted since *Shelby County v. Holder*;

Whereas there is much more work to be done to ensure all citizens of the United States have the right to vote;

Whereas “National Voter Registration Day” is September 25; and

Whereas the month of September is an appropriate month to designate as “National Voting Rights Month”: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2               (1) supports the designation of September 2018  
3       as “National Voting Rights Month”;

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

7               (3) to further the mission of allowing all citi-  
8       zens to vote, supports the following actions:

9                       (A) The development by public schools and  
10       universities of an academic curriculum that  
11       educates students about—

12                               (i) the importance of voting, how to  
13       register to vote, where to vote, and the dif-  
14       ferent forms of voting;

15                               (ii) the history of voter suppression in  
16       the United States before the passage of the  
17       Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C.  
18       10301 et seq.);

1 (iii) current issues relating to laws  
2 passed after 1965 that restrict the right to  
3 vote; and

4 (iv) the actions taken by State and  
5 Federal Government officials since passage  
6 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that have  
7 created barriers to the exercise of the right  
8 to vote.

9 (B) During the month of September, the  
10 issuance of a special Fannie Lou Hamer stamp  
11 by the Postmaster General of the United States  
12 Postal Service to remind people in the United  
13 States that ordinary citizens risked their lives,  
14 marched, and participated in the great democ-  
15 racy of the United States so that all citizens  
16 would have the fundamental right to vote.

17 (C) The allocation of requisite funds by  
18 Congress for public service announcements—

19 (i) to remind people in the United  
20 States when elections are being held and  
21 urge people to vote; and

22 (ii) through various forms of media,  
23 including television, radio, newspapers,  
24 magazines, social media, billboards, and  
25 buses.

1                   (D) The passage of legislation by Congress  
2                   to allow any citizen to be automatically reg-  
3                   istered to vote in Federal elections when that  
4                   citizen reaches the age of 18 years.

○