

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 3, 2011

Mr. A. Ralph Mollis  
Secretary of State  
82 Smith Street  
State House, Room 217  
Providence, RI 2903

Dear Secretary Mollis:

We are writing to you to express our collective concern that the bipartisan consensus and partnership between all levels of government, which for decades has been a central principle of election administration, is deteriorating.

Beginning with the passage of the Voting Rights Act, Congress and election officials across the country have worked on a bipartisan basis to open our democracy to all our citizens. Removing unnecessary barriers to voting was a cause shared across party lines. Sometimes, these efforts were directed at laws and practices that were intentionally created to deny citizens their right to vote. Other times, the laws or practices were relics of a prior era and served no continuing purpose.

As a result of these efforts, the franchise was effectively extended to all our citizens. Age, race, disability, language and military service were no longer impediments to voting. Outdated voting equipment, inaccessible voting sites and living abroad no longer deprived individuals of their right to vote. And these changes were made while putting into place safeguards against fraud.

No progress would have been possible without bipartisan support. There was a shared view that seeking partisan advantage at the expense of fellow citizens' voting rights was fundamentally wrong. It diminished our democracy and undermined its legitimacy.

But a disturbing trend is emerging. Election legislation and administration appear to be increasingly the product of partisan plays. Election officials are seen as partisan combatants, rather than stewards of our democracy. It is critical for our democracy that this does not continue. Voting hours, voting sites, identification requirements, voter registration regulation and access to mail ballots should not be used as weapons to achieve a preferred electoral outcome. But a disturbing trend is emerging. Election legislation and administration appear to be increasingly the

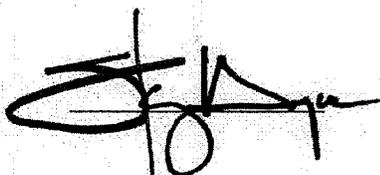
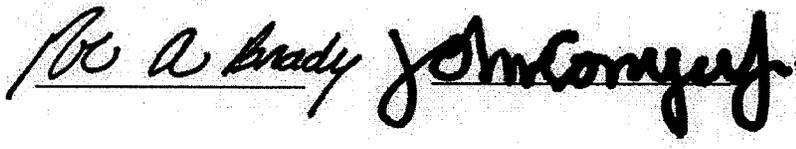
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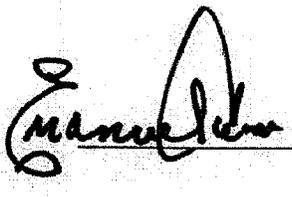
We are asking you, as front line participants in this process, to put partisan considerations aside and serve as advocates for enfranchisement. Critical to your role is the fair presentation and evaluation of the costs and benefits associated with any proposed change in election administration. We ask that you be vigilant in protecting against fraud but equally vigilant in protecting the franchise for all our citizens. History has taught us that our democracy has suffered far more from elected officials who chose to deny some of our citizens the opportunity to vote than from any other cause. There is no greater threat to our democracy than a diminished belief that the rules are fair and fairly administered.

Whether it is an elderly woman unable to locate her birth certificate for purposes of establishing her U.S. citizenship on election day or a college student whose school-issued identification is not among the IDs deemed acceptable for voting or a disabled veteran whose local polling place has not yet been made accessible, public officials on all levels of government should be striving to facilitate their right to vote, not make it more difficult.

We stand willing and ready to work in a bipartisan manner with our Republican counterparts in the U.S. Congress, as well as with state and local officials across the country, to guarantee to every citizen the right to vote and the certainty that every citizen's vote will be counted.

Sincerely yours,

 John A. Brady 

John Lewis  

Judy Ann Jason Altmire Jr Jim Mack

Wm Lacy Clay Hey Allen Mark Now

Bob Shan Trig Z Paul Hirsch

Louise M. Slaughter Norm Dicks Steve P

White Loney Hynd H' Rubin Hinojosa

Walt Ed Mackey Bill Pascrell

Betty Sutton      J. D. Palumbo  
Colo #7      /class #  
R43

Tommy Baldi      Ed Parsh      Majie K. Hirono

Vicki Amgro      Clarence      Li May

Brenda Shum      Cordyn McCarthy      Nick Rahall

Ailee      Frederica S. Wilson      John Baum

Howard L. Burns      Ed E. Cunningham      Peter J. Wudorzy

Eddie Bernice Johnson Bruce Selig

By C. Potts

Yvette D. Clark John W. Oliver

John W. Oliver

Robert H. ... Steve Cole

Steve Cole

Patricia Walker Kathy Castor  
FL-11

J. J. Moore

Cornelia ...

FL-11

Ernie W. ... Edith L. Engel

Red Dent Barney Frank John F. Tierney  
FL-19

Robert Shea Lincoln John

Danny K. Davis John M. Tierney

Don John Hansen Clarke

Zee John B. Loran Jamie Hahn

T. Hla Mike Dyle be Country

Anna G. Scho

Viviz

Ann Cash

Al

A. H.

Hy & D. D. 58th

Shelley Bailey Pete Stark

Rich Tasser

Jim Langevin Debbie Wasserman Schultz Jim H. Moran

Mike Ben Ray

Kurt Schuler

Paul Steno Bill Owens

Jodi Spier

Mike Conroy Lucille Royal Allard Leonard L. Bassett  
VA 1142

Blahperts Art. Buterin David Backstrom  
VA-3

Tom Scott Charles J. Fether Mike Anglem

Chris Von Holler Jim Watt Janet Poni

James E. Ryan Ron Kind John Amey

Allyn J. Schwant Ben Chandler Grace Horvath

Sam Sam

Ann DeBette

Christopher of Albany

Joe E. Leman Ann J. Sam

Daniel Pine

Clare E. Ciddee Jewell Madlee William Siss

Jerry V. Costello John Smith

Bob Kline

Falcone David Hilly

Martino J. Boudallo

John

Karen Bass

Joe Price

Barbara Lee De 7 DeLancey Robert C. Ford

Jim Moran Alce L. Hastings Benjamin J. Thompson

George Miller Mary Kipture Henry A. Weyman

Allen H. White Arthur W. Bishop J. Dennis J. Kucinski

Stan Allen Jan Schlosberg Keith Jackson Lee

Gregory M. Meeks Lois Capps Mary L. Ackerman

Marcia Judge Kath Elmi Hank Johnson

Rail M. Hjeltner Chel R Kath Hochul

Betty Moller Rush Holt Laura Rugh

Quinn Tia Ryan Lois Jones

Michael Michael Peter Dave Leland

Paul Blum Jim McDuff Fomms

C.A. Daulton Ruppensberger 100 100 1/11/11 Out

Walter M. Hulse 105 105 1/11/11 11-12

S. H. Hulse  
104-27

Lang Finell

Joseph Montoya

R. L. Hulse  
CA-29

Anna Davis

Frank Phillips Jr.

Donald M. Payne Tom Lane

Walter Montoya

J.R. Bl

Inf. H. Chi

Billy Z. Rank

Donna Mathew Nancy Pelosi Paul J. J. J.

Mike Ross Paul R. Kenny Lynne Cheney

~~Harold Kahn~~

Joe Donnelly

Donna F. Edwards

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Steph S. Lynd

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