

For Immediate Release
November 5, 2019

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Joint Report Provides Roadmap for Addressing Serious Voting Rights Issues Nationwide

Report released by NALEO Educational Fund, Advancing Justice | AAJC, and MALDEF presents new legal approach to issues arising from 2013 Supreme Court decision

Washington, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund, Advancing Justice | AAJC (Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC), and Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) today released a [report](#) entitled “Practice-Based Preclearance: Protecting Against Tactics Persistently Used to Silence Minority Communities’ Votes” which creates a roadmap for restoring the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to its full strength.

In its 2013 ruling in *Shelby County, AL v. Holder*, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the formula Congress approved to determine that certain jurisdictions should pre-clear changes in election procedures. This [report](#) presents a modern approach to reinstating preclearance to protect minority voters’ rights: practice-based coverage. Practice-based preclearance requires pre-implementation review of specific practices that have been used most frequently to prevent minority voters from casting ballots in jurisdictions whose populations are racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse.

“Over the past five years we have seen a marked increase in instances of voter suppression aimed at reducing the electoral influence of minorities, and Latino voters in particular” said **Arturo Vargas, Chief Executive Officer of NALEO Educational Fund**. “As we work to ensure Congress moves the Voting Rights Advancement Act forward, this [report](#) provides clearly defined guidelines for identifying and combating attacks on the voting rights of our communities.”

John C. Yang, president and executive director of Advancing Justice | AAJC said, “As the Asian American population continues to grow across America, it is our responsibility to fight against attempts to restrict access to the ballot box, especially in new geographic areas where there’s increased efforts to silence our political voice. A legislative fix to the erroneous Shelby decision must include a mechanism, such as the practice-based preclearance found in the Voting Rights Advancement Act, to help protect emerging communities from future voter suppression tactics.”

"Protecting the voting rights of everyone nationwide requires a robust reinstatement of pre-clearance, an efficient and effective alternative dispute resolution process to block rights violations before their effects are irreparable" said **Thomas A. Saenz, MALDEF president and general counsel**. "Pre-clearance should focus on both serial vote suppressors -- jurisdictions with long histories of electoral discrimination -- as well as copycat vote suppressors -- jurisdictions employing electoral practices with a long history of being used to prevent growing minority communities from gaining political power."

Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) was instrumental in furthering the VRA's goals, mandating that certain state and local jurisdictions with a history of discrimination in voting against racial, ethnic, and language minorities had to obtain federal approval for every proposed voting change before it could go into effect. The 2013 *Shelby County, AL v. Holder* decision effectively invalidated Section 5, allowing these jurisdictions to freely implement a number of tactics which discriminate against minority voters.

The [report](#) issued today not only outlines a geographic coverage formula for Section 5, but a complementary provision that targets the known practices policymakers have repeatedly used to silence growing minority electorates. The suggestions would focus administrative or judicial review on any jurisdiction across the country with a minority population of a certain threshold size and is seeking to adopt a practice that is known to potentially have a discriminatory effect on minority voters.

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About NALEO Educational Fund

NALEO Educational Fund is the nation's leading non-profit, non-partisan organization that facilitates the full participation of Latinos in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.

About Advancing Justice | AAJC

Advancing Justice | AAJC's mission is to advance the civil and human rights for Asian Americans and to build and promote a fair and equitable society for all.

About MALDEF

Founded in 1968, MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund) is the nation's leading Latino legal civil rights organization. Our commitment is to protect and defend the rights of all Latinos living in the United States and the constitutional rights of all Americans.