



January 13, 2022

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United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 1.4 million members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I am writing in support of the House Amendment to the Senate Amendment to H.R. 5746, the Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act, and any Senate rule changes needed to pass this legislation. Our democracy is at stake. Congress must take strong and principled action to pass this much needed voting rights legislation now.

Many state legislatures have taken radical action to suppress the votes of people of color, voters with disabilities, young people, and members of other historically underrepresented groups. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, a nonpartisan law and policy institute at New York University, at least 19 states have enacted 34 laws that will make it harder for Americans to vote. This unprecedented attack on voting rights comes on the heels of record voter turnout in the midst of a pandemic. Congress must act swiftly to protect the right to vote for all Americans.

As we begin this year with remembrance of the attack on the Capitol on January 6, we must remain vigilant about defending our fundamental democratic rights and institutions. AFSCME has been fighting for the right to vote since before the enactment of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. We have opposed voter suppression in whatever form it takes. Now is the time to enact these critical protections against the onslaught of voter suppression that has escalated in the last decade and accelerated over the last year. Arcane Senate rules must not prevent a majority of senators from protecting and enhancing our most precious rights as Americans.

Dr. Martin Luther King Day is a day of service, and Congress must serve our country through action. The way to honor Dr. King is to act now to pass the Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act so that every vote counts. There can be no true celebration of his life without the passage of this needed legislation.

Sincerely,

LEE SAUNDERS
President

LS:VG:hf

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

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