



PICO National Network | *Unlocking the Power of People*[®]



A State of Emergency on Voting Rights

As the world's leading democracy, our elections should always be free, fair and accessible. This Election Day, however, this core American value is under attack. Some politicians have manipulated the laws for their own gain by passing restrictions that could make it harder for millions of Americans to vote. The people most affected by the new rules are African Americans, Latinos, Asian-Americans, young people, seniors and low-income people. Here's how it is being done:

- **Voter ID Laws:** Passed in 11 states, these laws require voters to present unexpired state-issued photo ID with a current address at the polls. Approximately 21 million Americans lack this ID, including 25% of African Americans and 16% of Latinos (compared to 8% of Whites). These laws also stand to disenfranchise Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders, more than four million of whom do not speak English at all or less than very well and will face additional barriers to obtaining required documents.
- **Reductions to Early Voting:** Five states passed laws that reduce early-voting periods, which African-American and Latino citizens are twice more likely to use than Whites. This will make ballot access harder for working people.
- **Purges:** Several states are pursuing purges of registered voters from their voter rolls based on flawed suspicion of their citizenship status. Florida took the lead this year, creating a list of tens of thousands of voters to purge – mostly people of color, almost all of whom turned out to be eligible citizens. Now 13 other states are seeking to do similar inaccurate purges.
- **Disenfranchising People with Felony Convictions:** In 2011, Florida and Iowa joined Virginia and Kentucky as the only states that permanently strip people of their right to vote because of past felony convictions. In Florida, Kentucky and Virginia, the disenfranchisement of ex-offenders affects an astounding one in five African Americans – banned from the ballot box, despite having completed their sentences.

Collectively, we are witnessing the greatest assault on voting rights in more than a century – a true state of emergency. We know that Election Day is a day where we are all equal, whether rich or poor and regardless of race, we all have the same power when we walk into the voting booth. That is why we are fighting back – and we're winning.

As organizations representing communities of color we must strengthen our efforts to protect our right to vote and we must educate and invigorate our communities so we can increase our turnout and therefore, amplify our voices.

Supporting organizations: Advancement Project; Applied Research Center; Asian American Justice Center; Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum; Demos; Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies; NAACP; National Council of Asian Pacific Americans; National Council of La Raza; National Congress of American Indians; National Urban League; PICO Network

To find out how you can help these organizations in their efforts, go to www.prrac.org/vote