

Legislation Text

File #: 210211, **Version:** 0

Urging U.S. Senators Casey and Toomey, and the U.S. Senate to pass H.R. 1/S.R. 1, “For the People Act”.

WHEREAS, There has been an unprecedented attack on voting rights in many states across the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, In 2013, the Supreme Court struck down the heart of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that had required states and municipalities that had a history of racial discrimination to receive clearance from the Justice Department or federal court in Washington, D.C. before they made minor changes to voting procedures; and

WHEREAS, Since the 2013 ruling, states have reintroduced a number of measures to restrict voting rights; and

WHEREAS, According to the Brennan Center for Justice, 165 restrictive voting rights bills have been introduced in 33 states; and

WHEREAS, This February, state legislators here in Pennsylvania introduced 14 restrictive voting rights bills that would eliminate vote by mail and no-excuse absentee ballots, require signature matches on outer envelopes and ballots, exclude all mail-in ballots if not received by election day regardless of postmark date, and require that voters annually re-apply for mail-in ballots; and

WHEREAS, At a time when our country is more divided than ever, we need foundational change to break the gridlock, make progress, and save lives; and

WHEREAS, The wave of discriminatory practices such as voter ID laws, voter purges, and the closing of polling places that states rushed to implement after the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act (VRA) in 2013, came to the forefront in the 2020 elections; and

WHEREAS, The Government Accountability Office has found that Voter ID laws disproportionately target and affect low-income, racial and ethnic minorities, the elderly, and people with disabilities, and effectively lowers participation rates in elections; and

WHEREAS, The 2020 election was filled with confusion over new vote by mail rules, differences in deadlines and curing procedures by county, lawsuits and misinformation campaigns that led to voter confusion, delayed election results, and the disenfranchisement of thousands of voters; and

WHEREAS, Voter registration declined by an average of 38% during the pandemic and 1 out of 5 eligible Americans are not registered to vote, due in many cases to out-of-date and ramshackle voter registration systems; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 1/S.R. 1, “For the People Act”, would eliminate unnecessary barriers to voting, boost participation, set standardized guidelines for absentee voting, require each state to have adequate periods of

safe early voting, ensure no voter faces discrimination, modernize the voter registration process, and provide states the funding and equipment they need to administer and protect our elections; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 1/S.R. 1 would prohibit voter suppression tactics such as voter purging and caging that are often used to wrongly invalidate voter registrations; and

WHEREAS, “For the People Act” will take on the power of special interests, end dark money in politics, and ensure public officials are working in the public interest; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 1/S.R. 1 would end the dominance of big money and put a stop to pay-for-play politics by shining a light on dark money, empowering small donors, strengthening campaign finance oversight, fortifying ethics laws, and closing loopholes for lobbyists and foreign agents; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 1/S.R. 1 would put an end to partisan gerrymandering by requiring states to create independent redistricting commissions to ensure voters pick their politicians, and not the other way around; and

WHEREAS, Corporations must also act by divesting from politicians who support voter suppression laws as they divested from those who caused insurrection at the Capitol; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby urge U.S. Senators Casey and Toomey and the U.S. Senate to pass H.R.1/S.R.1, “For the People Act”.