

## Encouraging Federal and Indiana State Senators and Congresspeople to Pass the Freedom to Vote Act and The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act



We, members of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries Anti-Racism Task Force, call on Senate Majority Leader Schumer to continue striving to pass the Freedom to Vote Act and The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. And we call on Senate Minority Leader McConnell (R-KY), and Senators Braun (R-IN), Young (R-IN), and Paul (R-KY), speaking as their constituents, to vote in favor of these necessary acts to protect the beating heart of our democracy, against voter suppression and election subversion.

Voting is at the heart of the democratic process, and the ballot must not exceed the reach of any American citizen of voting age. Our Sacred Scriptures affirm that the Divine spark is breathed into each person, and to suppress the vote of anyone is to undermine the sanctity of everyone, each a loved child of the Creator, created equally in the eyes of our United States Constitution.

It is incumbent upon us as Americans to sustain and enhance a thriving democracy where each person is free to duly exercise their right of power. And it is incumbent upon us as persons of faith to prophetically speak from a Holy well of respect for the dignity of all people.

On this point, we wish to specifically address Leader McConnell's attempt to downplay the effect of voter suppression on voters of color by appealing to the belief that "African American voters are voting in just as high a percent as Americans" (expressed during a press conference following the "No" vote to restrict the filibuster). His remark exposes the institutionalized racism present since our country's founding that seeks to narrowly circumscribe the boundaries of who counts as truly American, and therefore, who plays a legitimate role in the polity. Inherent in Leader McConnell's remarks is implicit power and privilege to distinguish Black Americans from "Americans," ostensibly, white ones.

The United Church of Christ claims, since its inception, that it is a United and Uniting Church for the sake of the gospel, and we affirm in our bylaws that the Church in all its expressions is encouraged to speak prophetically on matters of justice, power, and public policy; to confront expressions of injustice and alienation in the Church and in society. The UCC General Synod has long supported voting rights and addressing obstacles to participation in the electoral process within the broader context of the civil rights struggle.

Leader Schumer, our plea to you is to ensure easy access to the ballot for each and every American, regardless of their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic category, health, wealth, religion, or any other factor that stands in the way of our ultimate duty as American citizens to ensure our democracy thrives into the 21st century and beyond.

Pass the Freedom to Vote Act and The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

Witness and Justice Anti-Racism Task Force  
Indiana-Kentucky Conference, United Church of Christ  
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