December 4, 2019

Dear Representative:

On behalf of two million members of the Service Employees International Union ("SEIU"), I am writing to urge you to vote in favor of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA), which will proceed to the House floor for a vote on final passage this week.

Following the 2013 Supreme Court decision in Shelby v. Holder, we have seen a surge of voter suppression tactics by states and localities. These shameful tactics include the enactment of strict voter ID laws, the purge of voters from state voter rolls, and the closure of hundreds of polling places that negatively impacts the ability of people of color, immigrants, young people, and other historically marginalized groups from accessing their constitutional right to vote. In 2016 alone, 14 states passed new laws that restricted access to the ballot for hard working Americans and since then multiple federal courts found intentional racial discrimination in our elections. These unjust actions by states and localities to our electoral system must be addressed with urgency to ensure the voices of working people -- Black, white & brown -- are heard at the ballot box.

H.R. 4 is an essential piece of legislation that will restore critical civil rights protections for voters while providing clear and consistent voting laws for every state to ensure all eligible citizens can participate in our democracy. The VRAA responds to the wave of biased attacks on our election system since the Shelby decision by establishing a “rolling” nationwide trigger mechanism so that only states that have a recent record of racial discrimination in voting would be covered. Under the legislation, these states would have to submit any changes in their voting laws to be precleared before implementation. In addition, the VRAA would grant more power to the federal courts to hold accountable states or jurisdictions whose voting practices have discriminatory results. The VRAA is the dire reform of our electoral system that our nation needs in order to restore this fundamental right and make our democracy more accessible to all people.

Our democracy works best when all eligible voters, no matter their color or how much money they make, can participate in free and fair elections to make their voices heard. We need Congress to restore integrity to our election system. On behalf of our members, we are proud to support this legislation to strengthen our democracy and values as a nation. We will add votes on this legislation, including the motion to recommit, to our legislative scorecard. If you have additional questions, please contact Isaiah Wilson at isaiah.wilson@seiu.org or (202) 730-7250.

Sincerely,

Mary Kay Henry
International President

MKH:BW:JG:iw:jf
opeiu#2
afl-cio, clc