

RESTORE VOTE

H.R. 4: THE VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT

H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA) restores the protections and enforcement of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) to its former strength after being gutted by the 2013 *Shelby County v. Holder* Supreme Court decision.

The VRAA responds to the wave of voter suppression tactics enacted by states and localities since that decision, requiring states with a recent history of voter discrimination to seek federal preclearance for election changes.

SUMMARY: The Voting Rights Advancement Act seeks to restore Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act by developing a process to determine which states and localities with a recent history of voting rights violations over the last 25 years must preclear election changes with the Department of Justice.

What other tools does the VRAA provide to protect the vote?

The VRAA requires a nationwide, practice-based preclearance for “known discriminatory practices,” including the creation of at-large districts, inadequate multilingual voting materials, and cuts to polling places. The VRAA increases transparency by requiring reasonable public notice for voting changes. The bill also allows the Attorney General authority to request federal observers to be present anywhere in the country where a serious threat to voter access and fair elections exists.



**RESTORES
VOTING
RIGHTS ACT**



**PREVENTS
VOTER
SUPPRESSION**



**STRENGTHENS
ELECTION
TRANSPARENCY**

The VRAA is strengthened by a manager’s amendment that expands covered discriminatory practices to include changes that decrease the operating days or hours of a polling place during the early voting period. Also included as a covered practice is a change made to the process of maintaining voter registration lists in jurisdictions with a racial or language minority group making up twenty percent or more of the population.

Which states would be covered by the VRAA?

Under the VRAA, there are 3 ways to become a “covered jurisdiction:”

1. States with a history of 15 or more violations at any level in the previous 25 years; or
2. States with a history of 10 or more violations, if one violation occurs at the state level in the previous 25 years; or
3. Political subdivisions or localities with 3 or more violations in that subdivision in the previous 25 years

The VRAA defines a Voting Rights violation as:

1. Final judgment of violation of 14th or 15th Amendment;
2. Final judgment of violation of the Voting Rights Act;
3. Final judgment of denial of declaratory judgment;
4. Objection by the Attorney General; or
5. Consent Decree, settlement or other agreement

What voter suppression tactics have states used since *Shelby County v. Holder*?

Since the *Shelby* decision, nearly two-dozen states implemented restrictive voter ID laws and previously-covered states have closed or consolidated polling places, shorten early voting and impose other measures that restrict voting. Now, with the Supreme Court’s 2018 ruling in *Husted v. A. Philip Randolph Institute*, states may purge voters from voter registration rolls if they miss voting in a federal election cycle.