

H.R. 885: Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2015

The facts

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (the VRA) is one of the most influential pieces of civil rights legislation. However, in 2013, the Supreme Court struck down one of the VRA's most impactful provisions. Section 4(b) of the VRA included a formula to detect which states' voting laws were discriminatory. Through the application of this formula, Section 4(b) helped to prevent racial discrimination in voting by requiring states with histories of discriminatory voting laws to get federal approval for any changes in their electoral regulations before they could take effect. Without this section in place, states are today free to enact racially discriminatory election laws without preclearance. However, a bipartisan group of legislators introduced H.R. 885 to amend the VRA to again include a new and improved preclearance formula, along with additional measures to prevent unjust voting laws.

H.R. 885 would help prevent the harm of voter suppression laws by putting precautionary measures in place to monitor repeat offender states:

- ★ By applying a new and improved formula, H.R. 885 would require states with five violations of the federal voting rights laws in the past fifteen years to receive preclearance before enacting and implementing any new changes to their state voting laws.
- ★ If passed, H.R. 885's new formula would apply to Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.
- ★ It would require states to notify the public prior to any proposed voting changes.
- ★ Judges would be permitted to order preclearance as a court ordered remedy in response to voting rights violations.

Why it matters

This legislation is incredibly important, especially as we see voter disenfranchisement laws increasing. By restricting the right to vote – from requiring ID at the polls, to ending early voting, to redistricting – our communities are prohibited from electing officials who actually represent their interests.

Why It Matters

At first it may not seem like there is a connection between voting rights and reproductive justice, but there is. Voter suppression disenfranchises the same people who are most affected by anti-choice laws. Whether it is racially-motivated gerrymandering or voter ID laws, these policies and discriminatory tactics threaten to further restrict young people's access to reproductive healthcare by suppressing voters who are most likely to support measures and representatives who believe in reproductive health access.

What you can do

- ★ H.R. 885 has already gained bipartisan support and has over 90 cosponsors. If your member of congress is already supporting the bill, thank them! If they are not yet cosponsoring, contact them and urge them to do so. [Go here](#) to see if your representative is on the cosponsor list.
 - ★ [Sign a petition](#) to show your support for H.R. 885
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Resources

Voting is power. Find out more about how to register to vote and get involved in civic engagement with [Rock the Vote](#).

To learn more about how voting rights are intertwined with reproductive justice issues, read our "[3 Reasons Why Voting Rights Are A Reproductive Justice Issue](#)"