



# **NAACP BRANCH 6243-B**

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To: Commissioners Court  
Date: February 13, 2017  
Subject: Voting Boxes

Many Texans and Americans face an ever-shifting voting controversy. The national struggle over voting rights is the greatest in decades. The NAACP will continue to fight restrictive voting laws to safeguard our fundamental right to vote. The NAACP Branch 6243-B has a long standing regard to African Americans and other people of color the right to vote. We opposed the elimination of voting boxes in Titus County.

Despite the fact that African Americans and other racial and ethnic minority Americans are guaranteed the right to vote by the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which was passed just after the Civil War in 1870, states and local municipalities continued to use tactics such as poll taxes, literacy tests and outright intimidation to stop people from casting free and unfettered ballots.

During the Civil Rights activism of the 1960's, just 5 days after Martin Luther King, Jr. led the march on Selma, President Lyndon Johnson announced his intention to pass a federal Voting Rights Act to insure that no federal, state or local government may in any way impede people from registering to vote or voting because of their race or ethnicity. In 1965, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law.

Most provisions in the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and specifically the portions that guarantee that no one may be denied the right to vote because of his or her race or color, are permanent, but some enforcement -related provisions have required reauthorization over the years.

Originally, in 1965, legislators hoped that within five years the problems would be resolved and there would be no further need for these enforcement-related provisions: however, it proved necessary to extend these in 1970, and again in 1975 and 1982. They were set to expire in August 2007, but were extended for another 25 years with the July 2007 reauthorization vote.

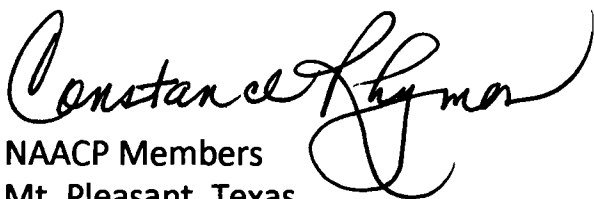
There were 3 enforcement-related provisions of the Voting Rights Act that would have expired in August 2007 unless reauthorized. The first is Section 5, which requires certain jurisdictions to obtain approval or "preclearance" from the US Department of Justice or the US District Court in D.C. before they can make any changes to voting practices or procedures. Federal approval will be given only after the jurisdiction proves that the proposed change does not, have the purpose or effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race or color.

Secondly is Section 203, which requires certain jurisdictions to provide bilingual language assistance to voters in communities where there is a concentration of citizens who are limited English proficient. This provision was added to the Voting Rights Act in 1975.

The third provisions are those in Sections 6-9 which authorize the federal government to send federal election examiners and observers to certain jurisdictions covered by Section 5 where there is evidence of attempts to intimidate minority voters at the polls.

The hearings held in 2005 and 2006 in the House and Senate found a new generation of tactics, including at-large elections, annexations, last minute poll place changes and redistricting which have had a discriminatory impact on voters, especially racial and ethnic minority American voters. Thus H.R. 9 was introduced with strong bipartisan support in the House and the Senate to reauthorize the expiring portions of the VRA and allow the federal government to address these new challenges.

Cordially,



NAACP Members  
Mt. Pleasant, Texas  
Titus County