

The Federal Landscape (And What it Means for Louisiana)

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Defense Fund





Overview of For the People Act of 2021 and the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2021

- H.R.1 - For the People Act of 2021
 - Introduced by Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD) on behalf of the Democratic majority on January 4, 2021
 - The 2019 Act was passed in the House of Representatives but not the Senate
 - As of January 13th, it has not passed the House nor Senate
 - Seeks to:
 - Ensure fair elections
 - End the dominance of big money in politics
 - Ensure that public officials work for public interest
- H.R. 4 - Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2021
 - Introduced by Rep. Terri Sewell (D -AL) on February 26, 2019
 - Passed in the House of Representatives on December 6, 2019
 - As of 2021, It has not passed in the Senate
 - Seeks to:
 - Restore the full protections of the original Voting Rights Act of 1965
 - Expand voter protections and safeguards
- Out of Louisiana's six congressmen, only Rep. Cedric Richmond voted in favor of either of them

For the People Act of 2021: Voting

- Improving Voter Registration
 - Online voter registration, correction, cancellation, and designation of party affiliation
 - Automatic voter registration
 - Same-day voter registration, including early voting
 - Requires annual state reports on voter registration statistics
 - Provides HAVA funds for implementing these change



For the People Act of 2021: Voting

- Stopping Voter Suppression
 - Prohibits removing registered voters from rolls because of returned non-forwardable mail
 - Prohibits challenges about a voter's eligibility from individuals who are not election officials
 - Prohibits providing false information about elections to hinder or discourage voting and increases penalties for voter intimidation.
 - Bans voters from being purged from the rolls

For the People Act of 2021: Voting



- Enhancing Access for Those with Disabilities
 - Requires states to promote access to voter registration for persons with disabilities.
 - Funds grants to improve voting accessibility for persons with disabilities
 - Creates a pilot program to allows persons with disabilities to register and vote from home

For the People Act of 2021: Voting

- Addressing Felon Disenfranchisement
 - Allows people with a past criminal conviction to vote in federal elections if they are not serving a sentence in a correctional facility
 - States and federal governments must notify individuals of their re-enfranchisement
- Ballots
 - Requires that all states to use voter-verified paper ballots
 - Requires that all provisional ballots that are offered to individuals at the incorrect polling location be counted
- Expanding Early Voting and Absentee Voting
 - Requires at least 15 consecutive days of early voting for federal elections. Early voting locations must be near public transportation and open for at least 4 hours per day
 - Prohibits any state from imposing restrictions on an individual's ability to vote by mail
 - Requires states to send absentee ballots at least 45 days before an election for absent uniformed service and oversee voters. Allows civil penalty for failure
- Improving Poll Worker Training
- Prohibits State Election Officials from Participation in Federal Elections and Using Official Authorities to Affect the Results of Elections

For the People Act of 2021: Voting

- Reforming Redistricting
 - Requires states to have independent redistricting commissions to draw Congressional districts
 - Prohibits mid-decade redistricting and requires states to use independent redistricting commissions to enact congressional district map
 - Establishes procedures to be followed by the nonpartisan agency and the Independent Redistricting Commission to appoint 15 members to the commission
 - Prohibits a plan that unduly favors or disfavors a political party on a statewide basis.



For the People Act of 2021: Voting

- Restoring the Voting Rights Act with an Updated Coverage Formula for the Preclearance Provisions
- Protecting Native American Voting Rights
 - Expands voter registration for Native Americans and promises equal access to all voting mechanism
- Declaring Statehood to District of Columbia
- Creating a Congressional Task Force on Voting Rights for United States Residents of Territories of the United States
- Protecting Voters
 - Bans any attempts to purge voters from the voting rolls

For the People Act of 2021

Campaign Finance

- Ensuring Honest Ads
 - Requires large digital platforms to maintain a public database of political ad purchase request of more than \$500
 - Includes measures to prevent foreign nationals from directly or indirectly purchasing political and requires broadcasters to also ensure that foreign nationals are not involved with the purchasing of political advertising
 - Expands the "stand by your ad" disclosure requirements
- Prohibiting Super PACs and Political Campaigns for Coordinating
- Allows for Personal Use Services as Authorized Campaign Expenditures
 - This includes childcare, elder service care, and payments of health insurance costs .

For the People Act of 2021: Campaign Finance



- Updating the Disclosure and Transparency Regulations
 - Updates online political ad disclosure requirements for political campaigns and government contractors
 - Requires all organizations involved in political activity to disclose their large donors

For the People Act of 2021: Campaign Finance

- Strengthening Oversight
 - Ensures that campaign finances laws are enforced
 - Restructures the Federal Election Commission to break the gridlock and strengthen its enforcement mechanisms
 - Repeals special interest protects to prevent government agencies from requiring disclosure of political spending
- Empowering Citizens
 - Creates a matching system for small donations for Congressional and Presidential elections
 - Gives Congress the power to regulate money in politics and political campaigns

For the People Act of 2021: Ethics

- Establishing Ethics Standards
 - Creates a code of ethics for Supreme Court
 - Increases resources for the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) Office, creates FARA investigation and enforcement unit in the Department of Justice and provides authority to impose civil penalties
 - Clarifies that counseling in support of lobbying contracts is considered lobbying and must be registered
 - Requires all Presidential appointees to recuse themselves from any matter in which a party is the
 - President, the President's spouse, or an entity in which the President or President's spouse has a substantial interest
- Providing Ethics Reforms for the President, Vice President and Federal Officers and Employees
 - Expands conflict of interest law and divestment requirements for those in the Executive Branch

For the People Act of 2021: Ethics

- Establishing Congressional Ethics Reforms
 - Expands conflict of interest law and divestment requirements for those in the Executive Branch and prohibits Members of Congress from serving on corporate boards
 - Bans Members of Congress from using taxpayer funds to settle any case of employment discrimination acts by the Members.
 - Requires that all reports from federal agencies mandated by Congress be published online in a searchable and downloadable database .
- Requiring Presidents to Disclose Their Tax Returns
- Imposing Greater Ethics Enforcement
 - Provides watchdogs with sufficient resources to enforce the law
 - Reauthorizes and enhances the Office of Government Ethics and its enforcement mechanisms





Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2021

History of the Voting Rights Act of 1965

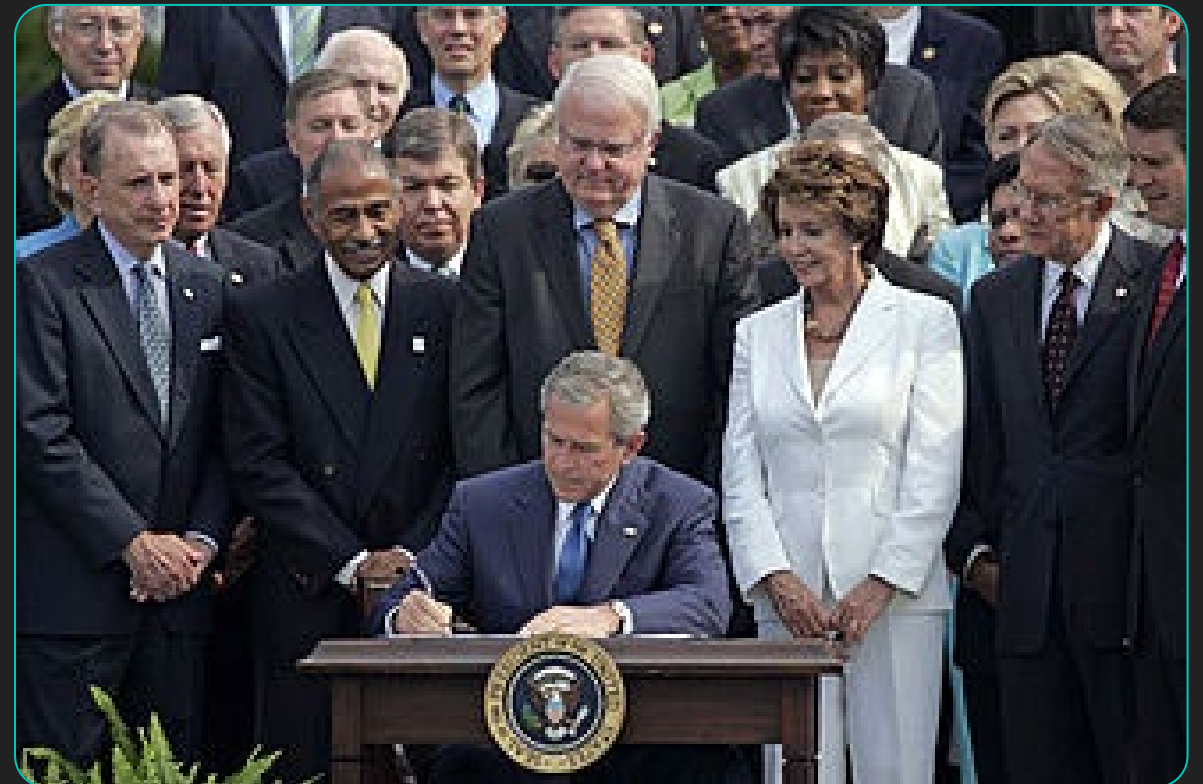
- First passed during the height of the Civil Rights Movement, the Voting Rights Act was passed to protect voters from being disenfranchised due to their race and skin color
- It is said to be one of the most effective civil rights legislation to have passed
- Black voter registration rates soared after the VRA was passed



Recent Events:

The Reauthorize Voting Rights Act and the Court

- In 2006, President Bush reauthorized the Voting Rights Act in 2006
 - It expanded the coverage formula and the preclearance provision
- In 2013, the Supreme Court overturned the coverage formula in *Shelby v. Holder*, making the preclearance provision unenforceable
- As a result, numerous states have passed strict voter ID laws and have strictly purged voters from the rolls



Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2021

- Proving tools to address discriminatory voting practices to protect all Americans' right to vote
- Creating a new coverage formula that applies to all states
 - Based on the discovery of repeated voting rights violations in the last 25 years
 - States with repeated and persistent violations will be covered for a period of 10 years
 - However, if they establish a clean record moving forward, they can come out of coverage

Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2021



- Establishes a targeted process for reviewing voting changes nationwide
 - Focusing on measures that have historically been implemented to discriminated against voters
 - For example, voter ID laws

Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2021: Additional Measures

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