



**House Committee on the Judiciary
Member Day Hearing
October 22, 2021**

In the November 2020 election, a record-shattering 4.93 million Georgians made their voices heard when they cast their votes. Six weeks later, Georgians did it again, showing up in record numbers for the Senate runoff election that changed the direction of America forever. Taken together, these two elections represent one of the greatest moments for democracy in the history of Georgia— and America.

Since then, we have seen a substantial increase in sustained attacks on our democracy. According to analysis from the Brennan Center, more than 425 bills with provisions that restrict voting access have been introduced in 49 states in the 2021 legislative sessions. This legislation – including S.B. 202, Georgia’s own Jim Crow 2.0 voter suppression law – is designed to make it harder for Americans to exercise their fundamental right to vote.

Georgians are no stranger to voter suppression tactics. Today, we might not be counting jellybeans in a jar, but S.B. 202 has the same purpose—suppressing the voices of people of color and the most marginalized communities.

Let’s be clear — voting is a right, not a privilege for the few. We are a democracy premised on the idea of one person, one vote. Your ZIP code should not determine if you have free and fair access to the ballot box.

With state legislatures and a Supreme Court that are willing to gut voting rights, it is up to Congress to protect people’s vote and voice.

The House has done our job: we have passed H.R. 1: For the People Act, and H.R. 4: John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, named in honor of my predecessor, mentor, friend, and civil rights icon Congressman John Lewis.

We need the reforms in both bills to meet the needs of the moment and address the very real threats to our democracy by those who are trying to deny a voice to people who look like me.

While passing both H.R. 1 and H.R. 4 in the House is a big step forward, we have many more steps to go. The House, Senate, and President Biden must work closely together to advance voting rights legislation into law – and quickly.

As we move forward, members must continue working to address the voting rights priorities under this committee’s jurisdiction, including H.R. 4’s modernizations of Section 2 and Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965.

In its disastrous 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, the Supreme Court said, “Congress may draft another [federal preclearance] formula based on current conditions.” The original formula had blocked 13 proposed changes in the 18 months before *Shelby*, proving its continued relevance then and the need for Congress to act now. Then, *Brnovich v. DNC* gutted Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, which prohibited discriminatory voting practices or procedures, further weakening our ability to fight voter suppression.

It is now up to us to restore the most successful and comprehensive civil rights legislation in American history.

To anyone who wonders what they would have done during the civil rights movement—now is your time to find out. You are either on the side of our democracy or you aren’t. The House Committee on the Judiciary must prioritize strengthening voting rights in the areas under its jurisdiction.