



PRESS RELEASE

ANNIVERSARY OF VOTING RIGHTS ACT: SIGNED INTO LAW ON AUGUST 6, 1965

This week, in advance of the Voting Rights Act anniversary, The Stockton NAACP Branch will continue to support federal legislation that would prohibit photo ID requirements to vote or any other barriers which would prohibit the “Right To Vote”. The NAACP will also launch its “America Journey For Justice” March from August 1 to September 16, an historic 860-mile march from Selma, Alabama, to Washington, D.C.– it will mobilize activists and advance a focused national advocacy agenda that protects the right of every American to a fair criminal justice system, uncorrupted and unfettered access to the ballot box, sustainable jobs with a living wage, and equitable public education.

The voting rights bill was passed in the U.S. Senate by a 77-19 vote on May 26, 1965. After debating the bill for more than a month, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the bill by a vote of 333-85 on July 9. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law on August 6, with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and other civil rights leaders present at the ceremony.

The act banned the use of literacy tests, provided for federal oversight of voter registration in areas where less than 50 percent of the nonwhite population had not registered to vote, and authorized the U.S. attorney general to investigate the use of poll taxes in state and local elections (in 1964, the 24th Amendment made poll taxes illegal in federal elections; poll taxes in state elections were banned in 1966 by the U.S. Supreme Court).

Census data impacts political representation. Census data are used to determine how many representatives each state gets in the U.S. House of Representatives for the next 10 years. Census data are also used to draw

lines for voting districts for Congress, state legislatures, school boards, and city councils. In addition, Census information is used to assist enforcement of the Voting Rights Act, which prohibits the creation of legislative districts that dilute minority voting strength.

No statute in our history embodies American's commitment to democracy more clearly than the Voting Rights Act. Originally, enacted in 1965, the Voting Rights Act prohibits the discriminatory voting practices that have disfranchised many Black votes in the United States. The voting practices prohibited by the Act include literacy tests, voter registration practices that unfairly prevent people of color from voting at disproportionately high rates and the drawing of electoral districts to minimize the significance of minority voters in determining election outcomes.

“Yes We CountOur Lives, Jobs, Schools and our Votes... there is strength in numbers. We urge you to join us in the March for America Journey for Justice. For additional information, please contact our branch at (209) 466-7000.

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