

60 years later: The fight for voting rights continues



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Friend,

Yesterday marked the 60th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, a landmark law that transformed our nation and became a global model. This Act strengthened our country, fostering unity and understanding among diverse groups. Thurgood Marshall once noted that while *Brown v. Board* ended "Separate but Equal," his greatest triumph was *Smith v. Allwright*, which empowered African American citizens with real political influence.

Over the decades, diversity has flourished across much of the nation, proving the Act's success, though its mission remains unfinished. Nearly 20 years ago, a bipartisan Congress extended the Act, with President George W. Bush signing it into law. However, the Supreme Court's decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* invalidated a crucial provision, rendering Section 5 ineffective.



Recently, the Supreme Court requested briefs on whether race should be considered in district drawing, a practice deemed necessary to prevent minority vote dilution, as Chief Justice Roberts highlighted in *Milligan*. The Texas Legislative Council has similarly advised the conservative Texas Legislature.

In a 5-4 decision in *Milligan*, Justice Kavanaugh questioned the current necessity of the Voting Rights Act. Yet, *Shelby County*'s aftermath provides a clear answer: the Act is still essential. Alabama authorities blatantly ignored the Supreme Court's directive to create a minority opportunity district. Across the nation, including Texas, efforts to dismantle minority-held electoral seats have emerged in places like Baytown, Galveston, Tarrant County, Fort Bend County, and even the Texas Legislature.

Despite significant minority populations, Texas did not elect a modern-day Latino member of Congress until the 1960s with Henry B. Gonzalez, and Barbara Jordan in 1972. Today, Texas operates under a discriminatory map, with white voters controlling 28 of 38 districts, despite being only 40% of the population. Black and Brown voters influence outcomes in just 10 districts. Recent legislative initiatives targeted four minority opportunity districts, eliminating three. Consequently, white voters will decide 81% of Texas Congressional districts, despite their 40% population share.

The Trump Department of Justice's false claim that Black and Brown voters cannot unite to influence district outcomes starkly reveals racial intent. The Constitution seemingly allows white voters to collaborate, but not minorities. This is a textbook case of racial bias. The Voting Rights Act remains crucial; its elimination is premature.

Keep Advancing,

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