H.R.1 / S.1 – FOR THE PEOPLE ACT

Impact of Select H.R.1 / S.1 Policy Changes on Black and Brown Political Power
H.R.1 / S.1 is a transformative structural reform package that will build Black and brown political power.
POLICIES WE ANALYZE:

DIVISION A: VOTING
- Online Voter Registration
- Automatic Voter Registration
- Same Day Registration
- Eliminating Discriminatory Voter ID
- Early Voting
- Voting By Mail
- Voting Rights Restoration
- Provisional Ballots
- Banning ‘Use it or Lose it’ Voter Purges
- Washington, D.C. Statehood
- Territorial Voting Rights
- Independent Redistricting Commissions

DIVISION B: CAMPAIGN FINANCE
- Small Donor Democracy
In 2020, 29% of people who didn’t vote cited not being registered as the reason.

Voter registration disproportionately blocks would-be Black and brown voters from exercising their fundamental right to vote.

NPR / Medill Poll, 2020

Registration Rates Among Voting Eligible Populations, 2018

- Black: 64%
- Latinx: 54%
- Asian American: 53%
- White: 71%

Current Population Survey, November 2018
1.9 million Asian American and Latinx voters registered to vote online in 2018.

Online Voter Registration can help make registration more accessible to millions of Americans of color.
H.R.1 / S.1 requires states to automatically register eligible, unregistered citizens to vote (AVR)

After implementing the first AVR program in the nation, Oregon added more Black and brown voters to the registration rolls.

Voter turnout also increased by 4 percentage points (64% to 68%) between 2012 and 2016, the highest of any state. Demos estimates AVR is responsible for 2-3 percentage points of that increase.

Share of Registrants and Voters Who Were People of Color, Oregon 2016

- All AVR Registrants: 15%
- First-time AVR Voters: 11%
- Non-AVR Voters: 6%
In October 2020, the Georgia Secretary of State reported 7.6 million registered voters in the state, 5 million of which came through AVR.

Millions of those voters are Georgians of Color, including hundreds of thousands of new voters of color that were added to the registration rolls between 2014 and 2020, thanks in part to AVR.

The 2020 margin of victory for the presidency was less than 12,000 votes in Georgia – meaning voters of color added through AVR likely made a decisive difference.
Registration deadlines before early voting and Election Day disproportionately disenfranchise would-be Black and Latinx voters.

H.R.1 / S.1 requires states to allow voters to register and vote on the same day (SDR) during early voting and on Election Day.

Americans Who Report Missing the Registration Deadline When Trying to Vote Most Recently

- Black: 11%
- Latinx: 11%
- White: 3%

PRRI Voter Engagement Survey, 2018
Recent research finds that SDR increases turnout among voters ages 18-24—the most diverse generation in history—by 10 percentage points and increases the youth share of the electorate by 1.4 percentage points, more than any other age group.

Hill and Grumbach, 2019

Forthcoming research from Demos finds that voter turnout among Black and Latinx voters in states that have SDR is higher than in states that without SDR.

Demos, forthcoming (2021)
Voter ID laws disproportionately disenfranchise Black and brown voters, especially young voters, who are less likely than white voters to have photo ID and for whom the costs of obtaining voter ID are more burdensome.
ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATORY VOTER ID
H.R.1 / S.1 requires states to permit voters to submit a sworn written statement to meet identification requirements for voting in federal elections

17.3%, or 1.2 million Black youth and 8.1%, or 600,000 Latinx youth, compared to just 4.7% of white youth (ages 18-29) reported not voting because they didn’t have the proper ID. (Black Youth Project, 2012)

Among youth ages 18-29 who registered but did not vote, 28% of youth of color, or about 2.5 million young, voting eligible, registered voters of color, reported having problems with voter ID, compared to 17% of white youth. (CIRCLE, 2016)

In Texas, people of all ages without voter ID were 14 percentage points less likely to vote than they were in elections without strict voter ID. Voters without ID are disproportionately Black and Latinx. (Fraga and Miller, 2018)
**EARLY VOTING**

H.R.1 / S.1 requires states provide at least 15 consecutive days of early voting and ensures early voting locations are accessible.

### Current Population Survey, November 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Voted Early In-Person, 2018 Election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinx</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Black** and **Latinx** voters are more likely to take advantage of early, in-person voting options than white voters.

In **2020**, the share of **Black voters** saying they planned to vote early in person or by mail jumped by **25 percentage points** over **2016**, from 42% to 66%.

Cooperative Congressional Election Study Poll, 2020 – via FiveThirtyEight
H.R.1 / S.1 will prohibit states from erecting eligibility requirements for voters wishing to vote by mail (VBM) in federal elections, making VBM more accessible to Black and brown voters.

Vote by mail systems in most states do not work equally well all communities. Black and brown voters face difficulties accessing VBM ballots, burdensome requirements for casting their ballots and restrictions on returning them, and higher rates of rejection of completed VBM ballots.

With more voters of all races and ethnicities interested in voting by mail after the 2020 elections, we need racially equitable VBM systems.
Felony disenfranchisement laws are racist in their roots and discriminatory in their impact. They prevent 5.2 million people, disproportionately Black and brown people, from voting nationwide.

Felony Disenfranchisement Rate Among Voting Eligible Population, 2016

- 6.2% African American VEP
- 2.3% All American VEP

H.R.1 / S.1 will restore the voting rights of those not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction.
VOTING RIGHTS RESTORATION
H.R.1 / S.1 will restore the voting rights of those not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction

1.7 million Black & Latinx people would be re-enfranchised nationwide by the post-incarceration rights restoration provision of H.R.1

Sentencing Project, 2020
PROVISIONAL BALLOTS

H.R.1 / S.1 requires that all provisional ballots cast by eligible voters be counted

Provisional Ballots are cast at higher rates in counties with larger populations of color, and voters of color may be more likely to have to cast provisional ballots.

Source: Center for American Progress, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Provisional Ballots Cast</th>
<th>Share of Voters Encountering Problems at the Polls Who Had to Cast a Provisional Ballot, 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinx</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BANNING ‘USE IT OR LOSE IT’ VOTER PURGES

H.R.1 / S.1 protects voters from being purged for not voting

Voter purges remove tens of thousands of eligible voters from the voter rolls. Mass purges based on faulty data disproportionately impact Black and brown communities.
Would have been removed from the rolls in 2020 by a conservative lawsuit challenging the eligibility of voters who did not respond to a mailer.

The margin of victory in the 2020 presidential race in Wisconsin was 20,600 votes. In 2016 it was 23,000 votes.

H.R.1 / S.1 protects voters from being purged for not voting.
At **63% residents of color**, D.C. would become the state with the second highest share of people of color in the nation.

With statehood, nearly half a million **(447k)** Black and brown Washingtonians would gain voting representation in Congress and full autonomy over their budgets and policymaking enjoyed by the states.

**+ 2 to 3**

**Congresspeople of Color**

2 Senators of Color = a 22% increase from 116\(^{th}\) Congress
For over a century Puerto Ricans, Guamanians, U.S Virgin Islanders, American Samoans, and Northern Mariana Islanders have had no voting representation in Congress and lacked full autonomy over their budgets and policymaking.

The residents of the territories have an international right to sovereignty and self determination under the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

H.R.1 / S.1 includes findings in support of & establishes a Congressional Task Force on territorial voting rights.
Self-interested politicians have long used the redistricting process to dilute the political power of Black and brown Americans, splitting communities into several districts, or packing them tightly into too few districts.
After implementing an independent citizens redistricting commission, the share of California state legislators who are Black, Latinx, and Asian American increased, in some cases dramatically.

Representation in California’s delegations to the U.S. Congress also improved, including doubling the Latinx and Asian American share of the delegation.

With the commission-drawn maps, Latinx representation in the Congressional delegation reached parity with California’s Latinx voting eligible population for the first time in modern history.
POLICY AREA: FIGHTING BIG MONEY IN POLITICS

Big money in politics makes it much harder for **Black and brown people** to build and exert political power, to effectively advocate for their interests, and to run for and win elected office.
Black and brown people exhibit robust democratic participation, including charitable and political giving.

But large donors skew sharply white due to racial wealth disparities driven by historic and current discrimination.
The largely white donor class has sharply different priorities than Black and brown voters, especially on the role government should play in creating a fair economy.
BUILDING A SMALL DONOR DEMOCRACY

H.R.1 / S.1 initiates a small donor matching system, pilots democracy dollar vouchers, and creates People PACs, all of which build the power of small donors in our elections.

In New York, **24 times** more small donors in the predominately **Black neighborhood** of Bedford-Stuyvesant, **23 times** more in **Chinatown**, and **12 times** more in the heavily **Latinx neighborhoods** of Upper Manhattan and the Bronx gave money to candidates for the city council, a publicly-financed system, than for the state assembly.

Brennan Center for Justice & Campaign Finance Institute, 2012

Once **Connecticut** introduced a grant-based public financing system, the legislature passed a slate of policies that helped working families including a statewide **EITC**, a **minimum wage increase**, and the country’s first statewide **paid sick days policy**.

Demos, 2015
In Seattle in 2017, the first cycle Democracy Dollars was in effect, the share of donations from majority of color neighborhoods increased by 46 percent when considering voucher donors, as compared to cash donors. Voucher donors also better reflected the age, gender, and income diversity of Seattle than cash donors.

Also in 2017, Four times as many people of color ran for open city council seat 8 as ran when the at-large seat was last open in 2009, and a candidate of color won.

Every Voice & Win | Win, 2018

Nearly forty percent of donors who gave democracy vouchers to 2019 candidates were new donors that cycle.

Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission Evaluation, 2020
BUILDING A SMALL DONOR DEMOCRACY

H.R.1 / S.1 initiates a small donor matching system, pilots democracy dollar vouchers, and creates People PACs, all of which build the power of small donors in our elections.

Small Donor Committees / People PACs

Regular PACs can raise unlimited funds, so they serve as a tool for the wealthy, white donor class to get together and get their way.

People PACs, are a tool for the rest of us. They allow base-building organizations in Black and brown communities to build power to make their voices heard collectively.

H.R.1 / S.1 allows candidates participating in the small donor matching program to accept contributions from People PACs (but not from regular PACs).
The individual policies of H.R.1 / S.1 are powerful, but as a package, they are transformative and will advance a more racially equitable, inclusive democracy.
Sources

  how-racial-bias-our-big-money-political-system-undermines-our-democracy-and.


