



For Immediate Release
Friday, August 25, 2023

LDF Media
212-965-2200 / media@naacpldf.org

LDF Condemns Efforts to Hinder Democratic Referendum on Cop City

This week, a referendum campaign by the Cop City Vote coalition faces a new hurdle: the City of Atlanta has revealed it will engage in a signature matching process that courts have repeatedly found to be inaccurate, subjective, and suppressive. The Cop City Vote coalition has been working to halt the construction of Cop City, a controversial law enforcement training center in Atlanta that has drawn national and local attention.

In response to this troubling development, Legal Defense Fund (LDF) Associate Director-Counsel Tona Boyd issued the following statement:

“The City of Atlanta must respect and fully support the political will of Atlanta residents who seek to exercise their rights to have their voices heard on how their communities are policed. Across the city, volunteers, community members, and coalition members have collected over 100,000 signatures to place the issue of Cop City on the ballot. Now, Atlanta has announced it will undertake a troubling signature matching process to validate these signatures, which is of deep concern to LDF and voting rights advocates across the country. The imposition of this process is reminiscent of anti-democratic tactics used throughout this nation’s history – and in Georgia’s very own recent past, where a court found similar signature validation efforts to be arbitrary and suppressive. The kind of signature matching described by the City of Atlanta is poised to result in inaccuracies, and a number of open questions remain about how this process will be carried out. Until the City of Atlanta provides more clarity, we will continue to have concerns about the potential discriminatory impact this will have on Atlanta residents.

“Atlanta officials have long spoken about the importance of promoting safety and eradicating discrimination, and now is the moment to take action. If Atlanta is to honor its history as a cradle of civil rights, it must live up to that promise and allow its communities to have their voices heard on the issue of policing.”

###

Founded in 1940, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.