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LDF Files Federal Lawsuit Challenging Louisiana’s Voting Requirements for November and December Elections

Today, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) and law firm Covington & Burling, LLP filed a federal lawsuit challenging Louisiana’s failure to ensure all eligible voters can vote safely in the upcoming elections amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The lawsuit challenges both Louisiana’s restrictions on the use of absentee mail-in ballots and its reduction of the early voting period from thirteen days during the July and August 2020 elections to seven for the November and December 2020 elections. The lawsuit was filed on behalf of the Louisiana State Conference of the NAACP, the Power Coalition for Equity and Justice, and three individual voters.

“Louisiana currently leads the U.S. in total COVID-19 cases per capita,” said LDF’s Fried Frank Fellow Zachery Morris. “Voters and poll workers will be put at risk of infection if officials refuse to expand eligibility for absentee by mail voting and extend the early voting period for the upcoming elections. Many of the state’s 2.89 million registered voters will be forced to make an unconscionable choice between voting and maintaining their health and safety, and that of their families and communities. Without safe, accessible voting options, many will be forced to opt out of exercising their right to vote.”

“Black people comprise over 50% of the deaths resulting from COVID-19 in Louisiana, but are only 32% of the state’s population,” said LDF Senior Counsel Catherine Meza. “The state’s refusal to protect its voters during this very real and very dangerous pandemic will disproportionately affect Black voters. We hope Louisiana will put the correct precautions in place to ensure every voter can cast a ballot and stay safe.”

Less than two months into Louisiana’s attempted reopening and roll-back of COVID-19 protection measures, the rate of infection climbed significantly. Despite this increase, Louisiana has failed to extend even the baseline modifications that were in place for the primary and municipal elections to protect voters during the November and December 2020 elections.

Read the complaint challenging Louisiana’s voting requirements [here](#).

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization. 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. 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 NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.

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