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Waller County Modestly Expands Early Voting in Prairie View; LDF's Suit Still Pending

In response to public pressure and [a lawsuit filed by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. \(LDF\)](#), election commissioners in Waller County, Texas yesterday took a modest but important step forward to provide equal opportunities to vote through early voting at Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU), a historically Black college in Waller County. LDF's lawsuit, brought on behalf of five PVAMU students, remains pending.

"This is a first step towards more voting rights in Waller County, but it is not yet the comprehensive reform that LDF's clients have been seeking for some time," said LDF Deputy Director of Litigation [Leah Aden](#). "PVAMU students are still being denied the opportunity to vote during the first week of early voting, and they are still being ignored by key election officials, which, once again, made these modest changes without engaging and accounting for all of its constituents' needs. We will continue fighting for the right of PVAMU students to have the equal access to the ballot as every other voter in Waller County."

Under the county's original plan, no polling sites were available either on the PVAMU campus or in the surrounding city of Prairie View during the first week of early voting, which concludes Sunday. Under that same plan, in the second week, the city of Prairie View is providing five early voting days. But two of those are off-campus at a site that is not accessible to many PVAMU students who lack transportation. In the majority-white city of Waller, by contrast, voters have two locations to vote during the first week and 11 days of early voting in total.

After yesterday's changes, early voting will be offered this Sunday at Prairie View City Hall, an off-campus location, and voting hours will be extended next week at the PVAMU campus center (from 7 am to 7 pm instead of 8 am to 5 pm) – an improvement over the original plan, but still not equal to what other Waller County residents were offered. Prairie View students have one of the highest rate of early voting in the County; they use it when given the opportunity.

The largely Black student population at PVAMU has been a target of restrictive voting policies since the ratification of the Twenty-Sixth Amendment in 1971, which gave the vote to all Americans 18 years and older, making the university a significant political power in Waller County.

The international law firm of Norton, Rose Fulbright joins LDF as co-counsel in support of our voting rights challenge.

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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 and 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.