



For Immediate Release
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Federal Court Finds Texas' Voter ID Law Passed with Discriminatory Purpose

Today, a federal district court found in *Veasey v. Abbott* that Texas bill SB 14 – the strictest photo ID law in the country – was enacted to purposefully discriminate against Black and Latino voters. The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) first challenged and defeated the bill in 2012 under the then-preclearance provision of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, which was struck down by the Supreme Court in *Shelby v. Holder* in 2013. No longer subject to preclearance requirements, Texas immediately moved to implement the law. LDF has since fought vigorously to eliminate it. This is the fourth successive win in this case by Black and Latino voters who have challenged voter suppression efforts in the state. Specifically, the trial court found that “at least one of the substantial or motivating factors behind the passage of Texas’ voter ID law was to discriminate against African American and Latino voters.”

It is also important to note that, in one of his first decisions as Attorney General, Jeff Sessions decided that the Department of Justice, which had also been prosecuting the case, would abandon the claim of intentional discrimination against Texas just one day before the February 28 hearing leading up to this decision.

“This decision shows why it’s critically important for organizations like LDF and the other civil rights counsel in this case to press forward, even in the face of DOJ’s decision to stand down on laws that were created with the purpose of discriminating against minority voters,” said LDF President and Director-Counsel Sherrilyn Ifill. “We cannot leave state and local jurisdictions to their own devices, in the face of such overwhelming evidence of discrimination, when it comes to protecting the right of all voters to participate equally in the political process.”

“The state of Texas must turn away from this pattern of discriminatory behavior,” said Associate Director-Counsel Janai Nelson, who argued this case before the Fifth Circuit *en banc*, and, most recently, before the district court along with other civil rights counsel. “This is the third separate decision this year in which a federal court has found that the state of Texas engaged in intentional discrimination against

minority voters. We cannot overestimate how detrimental suppressive voting laws like SB14 are to our democracy. Today's victory shows that such laws have no place in Texas or anywhere in our country."

LDF litigated this case with co-counsel Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr as well as teams of attorneys at the U.S. Department of Justice, the Campaign Legal Center, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, the Brennan Center, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, and others.

For more information about this case and about LDF's work to eradicate Texas's discriminatory photo ID law, [click 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 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.