

RESOLUTION NO. .

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

* * * * *

RESOLUTION TO CONDEMN VOTER SUPPRESSION LAWS TO ADVANCE EQUITY AND LIBERTY IN THE UNITED STATES

WHEREAS, the ratification of the 15th Amendment in 1870 affirmed that voting rights cannot be denied to citizens on the basis of race; and

WHEREAS, post-Reconstruction Jim Crow laws severely restricted minority voting rights, particularly those of African Americans; and

WHEREAS, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 contributed to a significant increase in voter registration and participation by African Americans and other minorities; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court's 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* struck down the provision of the Voting Rights Act that identified States and political subdivisions with a chronic history of passing restrictive voting laws; and

WHEREAS, the *Shelby County* decision effectively eviscerated the provision of the Voting Rights Act that allowed the Department of Justice and Federal courts to “preclear” any proposed changes to voting rules, providing an important check on unjust and discriminatory voting laws in the regions identified by section 4(b); and

WHEREAS, the absence of this preclearance requirement has allowed voter suppression laws to proliferate by permitting States and political subdivisions to pass restrictive voting laws without Federal preclearance to determine if the laws are racially discriminatory; and

WHEREAS, since 2021, at least 19 States had discriminatory voting restrictions in place; and

WHEREAS, voting restrictions make it harder for some subsets of the electorate to vote and the impact of such laws falls disproportionately on voters of color and young adults; and

WHEREAS, approximately 11 percent of American citizens lack government-issued photo identification, and a disproportionate number of these citizens are low-income, elderly, or people of color; and

WHEREAS, African Americans and Latinos are more likely than Whites to lack acceptable identification required to vote due to racial inequity; and

WHEREAS, at least 14 States have reduced early voting access and restricting early voting, which disproportionately affects people of color, low-income citizens, and the elderly, who often rely on flexible, early voting periods; and

WHEREAS, at least 5 States have passed laws making it more difficult to vote by absentee ballot and reducing absentee voting, which disproportionately affects low-income, minority voters, who are more likely than other citizens to have inflexible work- and childcare-related schedules; and

WHEREAS, in addition to State-level voter suppression laws, some states have also passed new laws that suppress minority voters, including reducing the number of polling places and offering insufficient language assistance for non-English-speaking voters; and

WHEREAS, while voting in California is easier than in other states, because California has passed several laws to protect voting rights, research has found racial gaps in turnout in this state during the 2020 general election, especially among Latinos. In areas with large communities of color, about 70% of registered voters cast a ballot. In primarily white areas, 87% of voters did; and

WHEREAS, the County of San Mateo led the state of California, as 1 of the 15 counties authorized by the state to conduct elections under the law, in implementing the Voters Choice Act in California and under this law, voter turnout was found to increase among Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans; and

WHEREAS, the County of San Mateo prides itself on being an inclusive County that seeks to protect the rights of all communities and individuals;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of San Mateo County condemns voter suppression laws to advance liberty and equity in the United States.

* * * * *