



Congressman

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Serving the people of Arizona's 7th District

The Voting Access Act



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Voting is the cornerstone of our Democracy, yet year after year our elections continue to expose serious problems and practices in the voting process that disproportionately impact minority voters.

In 2016, Arizonans faced lines lasting up to five hours. Voters experienced ballot shortages, voter ID and party affiliation errors, and confusion and physical difficulties accessing polls. Maricopa County had cut polling locations from 200 in previous elections to just 60 for that year. While most counties in the state averaged one polling place for every 2,500 eligible voters, Maricopa averaged one for every 21,000.

Voters in California and Texas also experienced similar problems this year. Unfortunately, the 2013 *Shelby County v. Holder* Supreme Court decision eliminated a safeguard that could have prevented Maricopa County from cutting 70 percent of polling locations. It could have also prevented Texas from implementing stringent voter ID laws and the closing of polling sites in a way that disadvantaged minority voters.

This masked form of voter suppression must stop.

The Voting Access Act states that no individual shall wait longer than one hour to cast their ballot on Election Day. It requires the Elections Assistance Commission, in consultation with the chief State election officials of the States, to establish national minimum standards for voter access to polling locations, ballot information, and protections from harassment. It ensures that each polling place has sufficient resources, including voting systems, ballots, and election officials and that voters have prior information on their ballots and polling locations. The bill also authorizes funding to aid states in complying with the new standards. Lastly, this bill requires the Elections Assistance Commission to issue a report on party affiliation misidentification issues and voter purge practices.

KEY PROVISIONS OF THE BILL

1. No individual shall be required to wait for longer than one hour to vote.
2. Standards for determining the number of polling places within a jurisdiction.
3. Standards for the nondiscriminatory placement of polling places.
4. Standards for ensuring that each polling place has sufficient resources.
5. Standards regarding accessible ballot and polling location information.
6. Best practices for preventing voter intimidation or harassment.
7. Study of instances of the misidentification of the political party registration or voter purge practices.

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