URGE THE US CONGRESS TO IMMEDIATELY PASS THE VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT OF 2015 TO REPAIR, RESTORE, AND STRENGTHEN CRUCIAL VOTING RIGHTS PROTECTIONS BEFORE THE NOVEMBER 8, 2016 PRESIDENIONAL ELECTION

IN COMMEMORATION OF BLOODY SUNDAY SET UP MEETINGS WITH SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES IN THEIR STATE OR DISTRICT OFFICES!
THE ACTION WE NEED YOU TO TAKE:
Contact your Representative and both your Senators and URGE THEM TO SUPPORT THE REPAIR, RESTORATION, AND STRENGTHENING OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT. URGE THEM TO SUPPORT S. 1659 / H.R. 2867. In-person visits tend to be the most impactful. To contact your Senators and Representative, you may:

A SAMPLE LETTER IS ATTACHED

Visit your Senator / Representative in person
Visit your Senators / Representative in his or her district office (either go on-line or look in the phone book to find the nearest office). Call the state / district office for the office hours, and see if the Senator / Representative will be available for a Constituent visit in the near future.

- In some cases, the Member of Congress may not have office hours but may be holding a public meeting near you (often times referred to as a “town hall meeting”). In that case, you should determine the day and place, and if you are able to attend, you should go and plan to ask a clear, polite, question about the Members’ support for repairing, restoring, and strengthening the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
- To look up your Senators on-line, go to www.senate.gov; click on “Find Your Senators”. Look up your Senators by state, name, or class (when they were elected); go to their web sites for e-mail addresses.
- To find your Representative, go to www.house.gov, and if you are unsure of who your Representative is currently, click on “Find Your Representative” (under the picture on the home page). This will help you identify who your congressman is and how to contact him/her. If you already know the name of your Representative, click the “Representative” icon above the picture and then you can select by state or by last name.

See the attached pages (after the sample letter) on how to conduct an office visit.

REMEMBER TO CONTACT YOUR HOUSE MEMBER AND BOTH YOUR SENATORS!!!!!!

THE MESSAGE

- As a result of the 2013 Supreme Court decision in Shelby v. Holder, there are currently no states or jurisdictions which are required to comply with the “preclearance” directive under Section 5 of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. This means that states or jurisdictions with a proven history of discrimination are able to make changes to their election laws and policies without proving to the U.S. Department of Justice or the District Court in D.C. in advance that the proposed changes will not disenfranchise racial or ethnic minority voters.

- Only Congress can pass a law to replace the criteria for which states or jurisdictions must comply with Section 5 “preclearance.”

- Members of the US House and Senate need to hear from their constituents that the repair, restoration, and strengthening of the 1965 Voting Rights Act is a priority and MUST HAPPEN NOW!!!!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS IMPORTANT MATTER!!!
If you have any questions, call Hilary Shelton at the Washington Bureau at (202) 463-2940.

GET INVOLVED! Join the NAACP and other national organizations as we mobilize for the Congress of Conscience—a part of Democracy Awakening— from April 16-18, 2016 in Washington, DC. For more information go to WWW.DEMOCRACYAWAKENING.ORG
The Honorable ___________________________  
United States Senate / House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.  20510 / 20515  

RE: REQUEST FOR AN IN-PERSON MEETING TO DISCUSS SUPPORT FOR THE VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT (S. 1659 / H.R. 2867)  

Dear Senator / Representative ______________________________;  

As your constituent, I would like to request a personal meeting with you in your local office to discuss my support for legislation which would repair, restoration, and strengthening of the 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA). It is vital that we address this crucial issue. Congress must act as soon as possible, so I hope that you will contact Congressional leadership and demand immediate action.  

As you know, as a result of the 2013 Supreme Court decision in Shelby v. Holder, there are currently no states or jurisdictions which are required to comply with the “preclearance” directive under Section 5 of the VRA. This means that states or jurisdictions with a proven history of discrimination are able to make changes to their election laws and policies without proving to the U.S. Department of Justice or the District Court in D.C. in advance that the proposed changes will not disenfranchise racial or ethnic minority voters.  

In Shelby v. Holder the Supreme Court also explicitly said that Congress could and should update Section 4(b) of the VRA, which it struck, which establishes the formula to determine which states and jurisdictions must obtain preclearance before making any changes to the time, place, or manner in which its elections are conducted. Thus, it is now up to Congress to do the work which must be done to repair, restore and strengthen the 1965 VRA and allow it continue to protect all American voters, so we are ensured that we are able to cast a free and unfettered vote and we can be assured that our vote has been counted.  

As we as a nation commemorate the 50th Anniversary of “Bloody Sunday” in Selma, Alabama and the historic enactment of the 1965 VRA, we cannot allow Congressional inaction to dismantle 50 years of progress towards a more perfect union. Thus, I urge you again to contact your leadership and demand immediate action on the repair, restoration, and strengthening of the 1965 Voting Rights Act in light of the Supreme Court’s devastating decision in Shelby v. Holder.  

I look forward to meeting with you soon and to discussing the matter with you one-on-one soon to know what you are doing to move this issue along, and to also receiving your thoughts on what more I can do to precipitate action.  

Sincerely,  

Sign your name  
(and be sure to print your name and your address  
Underneath your signature)  

Remember to contact your  
Representative and BOTH  
your Senators.
HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR CONGRESSIONAL ADVOCACY VISIT

CONTACT YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS TO REQUEST AN APPOINTMENT

- Look up your Senators’ or your Representatives website, or look in the phone book, for the district office located nearest you
  - Call the office number and ask their office hours.
  - Also ask if the Senator / Representative has any scheduled “office hours” and state that as his or her constituent, you would like to make an appointment.
  - In some cases, the Senator or Representative may not have any scheduled office hours in the near future. In that case, ask to make an appointment with whomever the appropriate staff person may be for you to discuss an issue regarding federal legislation.

After you have made an appointment with your federally elected representative, there are a few things you can do to ensure you are as effective as possible during your meeting.

PREPARE FOR YOUR VISIT

- Know something about the district / state represented by the person you are about to meet:
  - What are the largest cities;
  - Where does he / she hail from;
  - What are the largest industries in the area your Congressperson / Senator represents?
    - All this information can usually be found by looking at your Senator / Representative’s website

- Know something about the work of the Member of Congress you are meeting with:
  - What Committees does he / she serve on?
  - What issues has the Senator / Representative focused on during his / her tenure in Congress?
  - How long has the Senator / Representative been in Congress?
  - When is he / she up for re-election?
  - What did the Senator / Representative do prior to first being elected to Congress?
    - All this information can usually be found by looking at your Senator / Representative’s website
  - How did the Senator / Representative score on the last few NAACP report cards?
    - This information can be found at www.NAACP.org or by contacting the NAACP Washington Bureau

- Prepare a one-page summary of your position to leave with your Senator / Representative.
  - Include examples of the problem from the district / state if possible.

- Make a plan for your visit:
  - Chose a spokesperson for the introductions
  - Decide who will say what
  - Identify who will provide any follow-up information requested during the meeting

- Practice for the visit
DURING YOUR VISIT

- Dress for success in business attire and be on time!

- Explain who you are, why you are there, and be certain to explain that you are a constituent (let them know what town / area you live in).
  - Have each person introduce him- or herself by sharing their name and where they are from. Also talk a little about the group you represent (how many members, frequency of meetings)

- Be clear, concise, compelling and credible. Remember that there is often a strict time limit to these meetings!

- Be polite yet firm in explaining your position; try to avoid direct criticism.

- Bring the message back to your issue if it goes off track.

- Use personal examples or examples that you know of from the Senators state / district if you can.

- Be clear about what you want the Senator / Representative to do.

- Record key points of the conversation as well as any questions that you can’t answer; promise to get back with a response within one week.

- Leave a summary of your position on the issue(s) you discussed.

FOLLOW UP ON YOUR VISIT

- Write a note to the Senator / Representative within 72 hours thank him / her for the visit and reiterating your conversation

- Send any answers to questions that were posed during the meeting as quickly as possible

- Be certain to talk among your group to ensure that you all have similar memories of the visit

- Continue to contact your Senator / Representative to maintain an open dialogue on the issue(s) that are important to you.
Name of Senator / Representative: ________________________________

Office location: ________________________________________________

Date of visit: __________ Time of Visit: ________ # of people attending ___

**Facts about the Person you are visiting and the area he / she represents:**

When first elected: _________ When next up for reelection: _______

Hometown: ______________ Large cities in district: ____________________

Committees _____________________________________________________

Issues member has focused on while in Congress: ____________________

NAACP score in last Congress: ______________________

**People making the visit:**

Spokesperson: ________________________________________________

Group note-taker: _____________________________

Timekeeper (person charged with making sure nobody talks too long): __________________________

Who will write the follow-up thank you note for the group? ________________

Who will ensure that any follow-up information is sent in a timely fashion?

______________________________

**Who will speak about what:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE VISIT REPORT FORM

Date: ______________

Senator or Representative: ___________________________ State: ___________________________

Office Visited: □ Washington, DC □ District Office: ___________________________

Did you meet with the Senator / Representative personally or with a staff person? 
□ Senator / Representative □ Staff person: ___________________________

Length of Time of meeting: ___________________________

Visit Conducted By: ___________________________

Issues Discussed: ___________________________

Did Member / staff person appear knowledgeable about the issues? ______

Legislator’s Position:

Rank on issue (circle): 1 2 3 4 5

(with us) (against us)

General Observations: ___________________________

Who or what influences this member?

Follow-up needed in Washington: ___________________________

Follow-up need at grassroots: ___________________________

Is it worth visiting this Member of Congress / staff person again?

Signed: _________________________________________

(Please use the back if you need more space)
Date: ________________

Senator or Representative: ____________________________  State: ____________________________

Office Visited:  □ Washington, DC  □ District Office: ____________________________

Did you meet with the Senator / Representative personally or with a staff person?
□ Senator / Representative   □ Staff person: ____________________________

(name of staff person)  

Length of Time of meeting: ________________

Visit Conducted By: ____________________________

Issues Discussed:

Did Member / staff person appear knowledgeable about the issues? ______

Legislator's Position:

Rank on issue (circle):  1  2  3  4  5
(with us)  (against us)

General Observations:

Who or what influences this member?

Follow-up needed in Washington:

Follow-up need at grassroots:

Is it worth visiting this Member of Congress / staff person again?

Signed: ____________________________

(Please use the back if you need more space)
CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE VISIT REPORT FORM

Date: ______________

Senator or Representative: ____________________________  State: ____________________________

Office Visited:  □ Washington, DC  □ District Office: ____________________________

Did you meet with the Senator / Representative personally or with a staff person?
□ Senator / Representative  □ Staff person: ____________________________

(city)

(name of staff person)

Length of Time of meeting: ____________________________

Visit Conducted By: ____________________________

Issues Discussed:

Did Member / staff person appear knowledgeable about the issues? ______

Legislator's Position:

Rank on issue (circle):  1 (with us)  2  3  4  5 (against us)

General Observations:

Who or what influences this member?

Follow-up needed in Washington:

Follow-up need at grassroots:

Is it worth visiting this Member of Congress / staff person again?

Signed: ____________________________

(Please use the back if you need more space)