



REV UP Toolkit:

John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act

What is the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act?

The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act is an important bill that will impact access to voting across the country. This bill is also referred to as H.R.4, which is its bill number in the U.S. House of Representatives. The U.S. House of Representatives has already passed the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. **Now, we need the U.S. Senate to vote on and pass the bill.**

Named after voting and civil rights champion Representative John Lewis, this bill would restore the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The Voting Rights Act included many important provisions specifically protecting the voting rights of people with disabilities, including ensuring that voters can receive assistance when casting a ballot and preventing any ableist and racist discriminatory tests used to keep voters from the ballot.

One of the key parts of the Voting Rights Act, in Section 5 of the law, prevented states from passing racist legislation meant to keep Black voters and other voters of color from casting a ballot. The Voting Rights Act originally required states with a history of discriminatory voting practices to receive permission to change their voting rules.

In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court took away this requirement for approval of voting law changes in certain states in the *Shelby v. Holder* case by claiming that the way Section 4 of the law determined what states require preclearance was outdated. The John Lewis Voting Rights Act, introduced and passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in 2019, would provide an updated formula to determine which states need to receive permission to change their voting laws. This new formula would restore the power of the Voting Rights Act to prevent particular states from passing new laws to restrict voting access.

How will this bill impact the right to vote?

If Congress passes the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, this bill would not undo any of the anti-voting bills that states have already passed this spring. However, if the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act is passed, any state with a history of voting discrimination that wants to pass voting law changes after the passage of this bill would have to prove that the law is not discriminatory and receive permission from the federal government.

The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act would stop many discriminatory voting laws in their tracks and prevent racist and ableist voting laws that would restrict voting access to marginalized communities. The hundreds of anti-democratic voting bills in state legislatures, including bills that have passed in [Georgia](#) and [Florida](#), highlight the importance of passing the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act quickly to prevent more of these bills from passing in states that would be covered by the new formula.

What can I do to make sure that Congress passes the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act?

There are many organizations, both nationally and more locally, that are advocating for the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. These organizations have many opportunities to plug into their advocacy work.

- **Connect with the REV UP Network** - If you are not connected to a REV UP voting coalition in your area, but you want to connect to REV UP, contact Lilian Aluri at laluri@aapd.com and [sign up for our newsletter](#). If there is no REV UP Coalition in your area, consider starting one!
- **Contact Your Lawmakers** - You can [use our action alert tool](#) to tell your members of Congress that they need to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to protect our voting rights.
- **Connect with other Disability and Voting Rights Advocates** - In addition to REV UP, you can find organizations in your state to collaborate with so that you can build power in numbers. Some national organizations with local and state chapters include the [National Disability Rights Network](#), the [National Council on Independent Living](#), [State Voices](#), the [NAACP](#), the [League of Women Voters](#), and many more!
- **Educate Your Communities** - Tell others in your community about the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and why it is critical to protecting disabled voters

and voters of color from discriminatory voting laws meant to limit people's political power and keep them from casting a ballot.

Additional Resources

- [Support H.R. 4, Voting Rights Advancement Act](#) | The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
- [John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act One Pager](#) | Office of U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy
- [How to Restore and Strengthen the Voting Rights Act](#) | The Brennan Center for Justice

About AAPD and REV UP

AAPD is a convener, connector, and catalyst for change, increasing the political and economic power of people with disabilities. As one of the leading national cross-disability civil rights organizations, AAPD advocates for the full recognition of rights for the over 61 million Americans with disabilities. To learn more about AAPD, visit www.aapd.com.

AAPD's REV UP Campaign aims to foster civic engagement and protect the voting rights of Americans with disabilities. AAPD works with state and national coalitions on effective, non-partisan campaigns to address the concerns of people with disabilities, eliminate barriers to voting, promote accessibility of voting; educate communities about issues and candidates; promote turnout of voters with disabilities across the country; and engage candidates and the media on disability issues. Learn more about REV UP at www.aapd.com/revup.