
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 415 Session of
2015

INTRODUCED BY HUGHES, TEPLITZ, SCHWANK, FONTANA, COSTA AND
BREWSTER, AUGUST 18, 2016

REFERRED TO STATE GOVERNMENT, AUGUST 18, 2016

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Congress of the United States to reenact former
2 section 4(b) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

3 WHEREAS, On March 7, 1965, civil rights activists began their
4 march from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery, Alabama, to protest
5 barriers to voter registration in the state and were met with
6 state troopers and local police who utilized excessive force to
7 subdue the peaceful protestors; and

8 WHEREAS, The outrage stemming from the events of that day,
9 known as "Bloody Sunday," led to the passage of the Voting
10 Rights Act of 1965; and

11 WHEREAS, The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was signed into law by
12 President Lyndon B. Johnson; and

13 WHEREAS, The act outlawed discriminatory practices designed
14 to prevent people of color from voting; and

15 WHEREAS, For nearly 50 years those jurisdictions which had a
16 history of discrimination were subject to sign-off or
17 "preclearance" from the United States Attorney General or the
18 United States District Court before any changes were made to the

1 jurisdiction's election practices or procedures; and

2 WHEREAS, Alabama, Alaska, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi,
3 South Carolina and Virginia were required to obtain preclearance
4 as a result of the formula in former section 4(b); and

5 WHEREAS, Political subdivisions in Arizona, Hawaii, Idaho and
6 North Carolina were also required to obtain preclearance; and

7 WHEREAS, Between 1999 and 2005, more than 250 discriminatory
8 laws and regulations were either withdrawn or altered as a
9 result of preclearance; and

10 WHEREAS, In 2012, the United States Department of Justice
11 blocked 17 changes to election laws due to their discriminatory
12 nature; and

13 WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States reauthorized the
14 Voting Rights Act of 1965 several times since its first
15 enactment, with the most recent reauthorization in 2006; and

16 WHEREAS, In June 2013, by a vote of 5-4, the United States
17 Supreme Court in *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder* ruled that the
18 formula used in section 4 was out of date and removed the 11
19 states from the required preclearance; and

20 WHEREAS, Shortly after the Supreme Court ruling several
21 states subject to preclearance moved forward with restrictive
22 voting laws which put in place barriers to voting access; and

23 WHEREAS, Discrimination still exists in this nation and it is
24 necessary to restore section 4(b) of the Voting Rights Act of
25 1965 to protect citizens and encourage voter participation;
26 therefore be it

27 RESOLVED, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
28 urge the Congress of the United States to reenact section 4(b)
29 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to

1 the President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, the
2 Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and each
3 member of Congress from Pennsylvania.