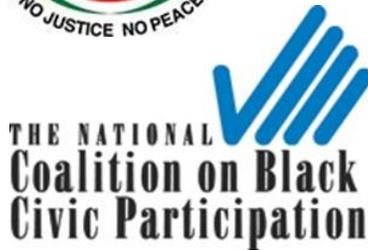




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NATIONAL ACTION NETWORK (NAN) & CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS MOBILIZE AROUND VOTING RIGHTS CASES BEING HEARD AT SUPREME COURT TODAY

(New York, NY) – National Action Network (NAN) along with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), National Urban League (NUL), National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP), and National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women (NOBEL Women) and National Black Caucus of State Legislators have issued the following statements regarding key voting rights cases being heard before the United States Supreme Court today. Today, the United States Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Evenwel v. Abbott* and *Harris v. Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission*, National Action Network (NAN) and its founder Rev. Al Sharpton, along with these other leading civil rights groups, are warning people about the grave consequences of unequal protection under the law and the ramifications that will be had if non-voters are excluded from the population count in drawing legislative district lines:

Statement from National Action Network President and Founder Rev. Al Sharpton:

“We believe in the constitutional principle that every person deserves to be given equal protection and representation under the law. The legal effort to redraw certain district lines across the country is a calculated move by some in the right wing to undercount young people and minorities simply because of their political leanings. It is an attempt to force states to leave people of color out of their voting populations – including legal permanent residents – and we cannot allow dangerous redistricting to push us out of the political process. We cannot allow political power to be removed from urban areas by denying ‘one person, one vote.’ In our community, nearly one out of every three people is under the age of 18, and in some other communities, the numbers are greater. Minority communities tend to have greater numbers of people in younger age groups and some are using this as a political tactic to push us out of the legislative process, as is the case in *Evenwel v. Abbott*. As a collective we must stand up against the politics of exclusion and protect our communities.”

Statement from National Association for the Advancement of Colored People:

“When election districts are apportioned on the basis of anything less than the total population of each district, the fundamental underpinnings of our representative government are compromised,” said Cornell William Brooks, President and CEO of the NAACP. “In an era where governments have been making it harder to vote, we must ensure that elected leaders are accountable to all their constituents – not simply those who happen to satisfy the requirements for voting eligibility.”

Statement from Senator Catherine E. Pugh (MD), President, National Black Caucus of State Legislators:

“As legislators, we are called to ensure the voices of the people we represent are heard. Though voting rights remain under attack across the nation, we call on the U.S. Supreme Court to provide the protections the American people deserve.”

Statement from National Coalition on Black Civic Participation President and CEO Black Women’s Roundtable national convener Melanie Campbell:

“I stand in solidarity with the National Action Network, the Reverend Al Sharpton and other civil rights and social justice organizations in urging the U. S. Supreme Court to rule in favor of one person, one vote in the *Evenwel v. Abbott* redistricting case. Every person living in our nation deserves to be counted and if *Evenwel* wins, young people under 18 will be excluded from being counted. We urge the Supreme Court to ensure our representative democracy remains strong now and for future generations.”

Statement from Alabama State Rep. Laura Hall, President of National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women:

"It is our responsibility, not only as lawmakers, but as American citizens to ensure that we are doing everything within our power to protect and preserve the sanctity of the vote. Should we fail to stand for what is right and lawful, we do those who came and sacrificed before us a disservice."

Statement from National Urban League President and CEO Marc Morial:

"The case of *Evenwel v. Abbott* now before the U.S. Supreme Court represents the most dramatic threat in modern times to the basic principle that everyone in America must be counted in our representative government. Having two different sets of redistricting standards would bring utter chaos in our electoral system - this is insane. If *Evenwel* prevails, a costly and massively disruptive redistricting process would have to occur all across the United States. That is why the National Urban League has signed on to an amicus brief in support of preserving the precious principle that everyone is counted when legislative districts determine government representation and the allocation of vital resources."

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