



July 3, 2013

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Rep. Joe Armstrong (TN)
President

Sen. Catherine Pugh (MD)
President-Elect

Rep. Gregory Porter (IN)
Vice-President

Rep. Alan Williams (FL)
Secretary

Rep. Laura V. Hall (AL)
Financial Secretary

Rep. Howard Mosby (GA)
Treasurer

Sen. Hillman Terome Frazier (MS)
Parliamentarian

Rep. Dee Dawkins-Haigler (GA)
Chaplain

Rep. Barbara W. Ballard (KS)
Past President

REGIONAL CHAIRS

Rep. Ernest Hewett (CT)
Chair, Region I

Rep. Ron Waters (PA)
Chair, Region II

Del. Nathaniel T. Oaks (MD)
Chair, Region III

Rep. Karen Camper (TN)
Chair, Region IV

Rep. John R.C. King (SC)
Chair, Region V

Sen. Gloria Butler (GA)
Chair, Region VI

Rep. Willie J. Perkins, Sr. (MS)
Chair, Region VII

Rep. Ken Dunkin (IL)
Chair, Region VIII

Sen. Charleta B. Tavares (OH)
Chair, Region IX

Rep. Regina Barrow (LA)
Chair, Region X

Sen. David Haley (KS)
Chair, Region XI

Rep. Angela Williams (CO)
Chair, Region XII

Rep. Calvin Smyre (GA)
Ex-Officio Member

Rep. Mary Coleman (MS)
Ex-Officio Member

Rep. Lois DeBerry (TN)
Ex-Officio Member

LaKimba B. DeSadier
NBCSL Executive Director

The President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL), we would like to express our displeasure at the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, striking down the coverage formula within the Voting Rights Act of 1965. We applaud your intentions to fully reestablish this law that has protected American voting rights for almost half a century.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is a cornerstone of our nation's civil rights laws. It is abundantly clear that preclearance provisions within the law continue to regularly protect Americans from discriminatory state and local voting practices to this day. Current evidence has shown that the Voting Rights Act should be strengthened and expanded—not gutted. As recently as 2012, this review process has halted harmful voting provisions in several states that would have otherwise prevented many of the most vulnerable American citizens from voting. These instances demonstrate the continued need for preclearance protections under the law, but due to the *Shelby* ruling, millions of Americans are now again at risk of having their voting rights severely curtailed.

The members of NBCSL look forward to your leadership to support a new bipartisan solution to restore full and robust voting protections for Americans. This solution will undoubtedly require a renewal of Section 4(b) of the Voting Rights Act, pertinent updates to best reflect current voting challenges, and maintenance of the remaining Voting Rights Act provisions. We also look forward to working with your Administration to ensure that the remaining actionable sections of the Voting Rights Act are fully enforceable during this vulnerable period.

President Lyndon B. Johnson called anti-voting laws the “last major shackle of those fierce and ancient bonds,” and called the Voting Rights Act “a triumph for freedom as huge as any victory that has ever been won on any battlefield.” Unfortunately, the Supreme Court's ruling has reversed much of this great victory, and hampered essential voting rights protections. NBCSL stands ready to provide both you and Congress whatever assistance necessary to facilitate this important work.

Thank you. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Representative Joe Armstrong (TN)
President
National Black Caucus of State Legislators