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The National Black Caucus of State Legislators Releases Special Report On Nationwide Expansive Voting Rights Legislation

New report highlights legislation passed by Black State lawmakers aimed at protecting the right to vote in states across the nation

(Washington, D.C.) – In the face of recent suppressive attacks on voting rights across the country, the nation’s largest membership association of Black state lawmakers - the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) - releases a special report on state-led, expansive voting rights legislation in April 2014. With this report, NBCSL joins leading civil rights organizations in a state-by-state call for the full restoration of voting rights for every American.

“State lawmakers are essential in the battle for voting rights,” said NBCSL President, Representative Joe Armstrong (TN). “We experience the barriers to the ballot box, and, more importantly, we hear stories directly from our constituents, fighting to exercise our nation’s most sacred right.

NBCSL’s report, *Upholding Voting Rights for All Americans*, summarizes a total of 601 pieces of pro-voting rights legislation from 41 states (including the District of Columbia) sponsored or co-sponsored by NBCSL members between 2011 and 2013. The purpose of the April report is to show that despite the passage and implementation of restrictive laws, Black state legislators are fighting back.

Legislation pursued by NBCSL members generally sought to improve access to the ballot box and combat restrictions that exclude people of color, the elderly, young people, and those who are struggling financially. NBCSL’s report focuses policy solutions on six main categories of reform: 1) Combating Discriminatory Voter ID Laws, 2) Modernizing Voter Registration Systems and Increasing Opportunities to Vote, 3) Felony Re-enfranchisement, 4) Adopting 21st Century Voter Technology, 5) Fair and Transparent Redistricting, and 6) Additional Tools of Voter Empowerment.

“Legislation modernizing our voter registration systems and increasing opportunities to vote comprised the greatest number of bills introduced,” said NBCSL Policy Committee Chair, Law, Justice, and Ethics, State Senator Arthenia Joyner (FL). “This tells us something: Despite attempts in some states to suppress the vote, there remains an even more determined effort to broaden voters’ access. Americans treasure the freedom to exercise their democratic responsibilities and NBCSL’s lawmakers are responding.”

NBCSL strongly promotes safeguarding and broadening voting rights, and since the organization was founded, NBCSL has fought against the efforts to prohibit, suppress, and limit the vote. This fight happens on-the-ground, in statehouses, districts, and communities across the country. NBCSL asserts that voting is a fundamental right and an important civic duty that



should not be infringed upon. To view the full report, click here: <http://nbcsl.org/public-policy/policy-publications.html>.

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The National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) is a membership association representing over 650 African-American state legislators from 45 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. NBCSL members represent upwards of 65 million Americans of all racial backgrounds. To learn more visit www.nbcsl.org.

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