



City of South Bend Common Council

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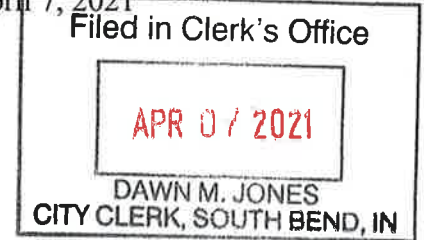
Karen L. White
At Large

Rachel Tomas Morgan
At Large

Lori K. Hamann
At Large

South Bend Common Council
4th Floor, County-City Building
South Bend, IN 46601

April 7, 2021



**Re: A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY
OF SOUTH BEND, INDIANA, CONDEMNING ANY ACTIONS OF
STATE OR FEDERAL LEGISLATORS THAT HAVE THE INTENT,
EFFECT OR APPEARANCE OF SUPPRESSING THE RIGHT TO
VOTE OF ANY ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL AMERICAN CITIZEN OR
GROUP OF AMERICAN CITIZENS**

Dear Council Members:

As you all know, the news cycles are currently filled with stories about members of legislatures, both state and federal, either passing laws, or attempting to pass laws, that have the effect of limiting or restricting access to the right to vote. As elected officials, we should be appalled at the idea of making it more difficult for eligible voters to exercise their Constitutional rights.

This Resolution expresses this Council's condemnation of any actions by legislators that have the intent, effect, or appearance of suppressing any eligible voter's right to vote. The Resolution briefly traces the history of such actions from the enactment of the 15th Amendment in 1870, through Jim Crow laws, through the Voting Rights Act of 1965, through the United States Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* which, despite acknowledging that "voting discrimination still exists; no one doubts that", struck down parts of the Voting Rights Act, through today's headlines.

This Resolution also directs the City Clerk to mail a copy of the Resolution to Indiana's two federal Senators and our district Congresswoman and to the local representatives in the Indiana General Assembly.

Several community organizations have already expressed support for this Resolution. They include: La Casa de Amistad, Black Lives Matter, Fates in Indiana, Michiana Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression and the Sunrise Movement of South Bend.



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We ask that this resolution be assigned to the Community Relations Committee for consideration at its April 12, 2021 meeting and presented to the full Council for passage at its meeting on the same date.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Lori K. Hamann., South Bend Common
Council at Large

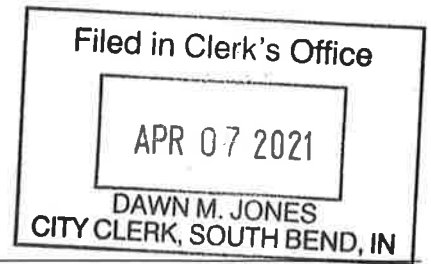
Henry Davis, Jr., South Bend Common
Council, Second District

Karen L. White, President, South Bend
Common Council

Sharon McBride Vice-President, South
Bend Common Council

BILL NO. 21-20

RESOLUTION NO. _____



**A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOUTH BEND, INDIANA,
CONDEMNING ANY ACTIONS OF STATE OR FEDERAL LEGISLATORS THAT HAVE THE INTENT,
EFFECT OR APPEARANCE OF SUPPRESSING THE RIGHT TO VOTE OF ANY ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL
AMERICAN CITIZEN OR GROUP OF AMERICAN CITIZENS**

Whereas, the right to vote is a fundamental right of every American citizen and the foundation of a vibrant democracy; and

Whereas, barriers to voting should be dismantled rather than constructed and every eligible voter should be able to cast their vote and have it counted; and

Whereas, the ratification of the 15th Amendment in 1870 affirms that voting rights cannot be denied to citizens based on race; and

Whereas, despite this Constitutional Amendment, post-Reconstruction Jim Crow laws severely restricted minority voting rights, particularly those of African Americans; and

Whereas, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 contributed to a significant increase in voter registration and participation by African Americans and other minorities; and

Whereas, the Supreme Court's 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 529, 536 (2013), struck down section 4(b) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, but specifically recognized that "voting discrimination still exists; no one doubts that"; and

Whereas, following the *Shelby County* decision, at least 14 States added additional voting restrictions for the first time in a Presidential election in time for the 2016 contest; and

Whereas, there were 22% fewer polling places nationally between the 2012 to the 2020 election; and

Whereas, it is reported that currently at least 47 states across the country have enacted, or are considering, new laws that restrict access to voting, including laws requiring certain forms of ID to vote, laws restricting voter registration and laws limiting early voting; and

Whereas, one state has gone so far as to criminalize provision of food and water to voters waiting in long lines to vote; and

Whereas, voter ID laws, restrictions on voter registration, purging of voter rolls, and more restrictions on early voting are the latest tactics used to suppress voting by historically disenfranchised groups, including people of color, the elderly, young voters, and people with disabilities; and

Whereas, these laws can impose additional costs on states at a time when state funds are needed to support education, social services and other important priorities; and

Whereas, up to 11% of Americans lack government-issued IDs, and up to 7% lack official documents proving their citizenship; and

Whereas, of the estimated 11 percent of American citizens among who lack government-issued photo identification, a disproportionate number are low-income, elderly, or people of color; and

Whereas, many voting-eligible, low-income Latino voters are naturalized United States citizens who lack proof of citizenship and cannot afford a Certificate of Citizenship or a Replacement Certificate of Naturalization, which cost \$1,170 and \$555, respectively; and

Whereas, insufficient language assistance at polling places could possibly threaten eligible Latino voter turnout in future Presidential elections.

Whereas, proponents of voter suppression laws have failed to show that voter fraud is a problem anywhere in the country while proven facts establish the contrary, that voter fraud is exceedingly rare; and

Whereas, a broad coalition of top government and industry officials declared the Nov. 3, 2020 voting “the most secure in American history”; and

Whereas, , the American electorate is increasingly diverse ; and

Whereas, the American people have demonstrated a desire to participate fully in the electoral process;

Now, Therefore, be it resolved, by the Common Council of the City of South Bend, Indiana, as follows:

Section I. The South Bend Common Council hereby condemns any actions of state or federal legislators that have the intent, effect or appearance of suppressing the right to vote of any eligible individual American citizen or group of American citizens.

Section II. The South Bend Common Council instead urges state and federal legislators to make it a priority to guarantee that all eligible Americans citizens have both the opportunity and access to their Constitutional right to vote.

Section III. The Common Council encourages the citizens of South Bend to speak up and let their state and federal legislators know that a democracy depends on the exercise of the right to vote, not the suppression of the right to vote.

Section IV. The City Clerk is directed to mail a copy of this Resolution to Senators Todd Young and Mike Braun, Congresswoman Jackie Walorski, Indiana State Senate members Ryan Mishler, David Niezgodski, Linda Rogers, Indiana House of Representatives members Dale DeVon, B. Maureen Bauer, Jake Teshka, Ryan Dvorak, Jack Jordan, and Timothy Wesco.

Karen L. White, Council President
South Bend Common Council