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JOHN LEWIS VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT DAY OF ACTION
May 8, 2021

The League of Women Voters is glad to have this opportunity to honor Representative John Lewis, a hero who made immense contributions to our national life together. We honor him in the most important way that we can, by advocating for secure accessible elections for all South Carolinians and for all Americans.

We believe that this is an effort that must be made at both the state and national levels. We are pleased that in South Carolina there is currently a bipartisan dialogue underway that can lead to improved access to the ballot for all voters. The League appreciates the efforts of legislators like Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter and Rep. Brandon Newton to find common ground on this most fundamental of issues for our citizens.

However, state action is not sufficient to ensure that voters across our country have secure access to the ballot. We therefore support and applaud the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (JLVRA) and other bills intended to protect the vote at the federal level. There are claims that the federal government is guilty of overreach in these bills, but the League believes that the federal government has been guilty of underreach, abandoning its responsibility since the U. S. Supreme Court gutted Section V of the Voting Rights Act. This SCOTUS decision was, in the polite legal terminology, wrongly decided. It was based upon the unsupported and indeed unsupportable claim that racism is dead in our nation and specifically in state election laws. We are left with a very inadequate federal response to widespread inequities in access to the ballot.

Today we hope for progress on both the state and national fronts. We hope that when South Carolina is featured in news about elections it will be to tell of positive progress for all South Carolinians. We further very much hope that the federal government will step up to its responsibilities to protect the principle of one-person-one-vote and equal access for all.

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