

Voters and Civil Rights Organizations Take Legal Action Challenging Trump Campaign's Voter Suppression Efforts in Pennsylvania

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PITTSBURGH, Penn. — Voters are fighting back against the Trump campaign's illegal attempt to make it difficult for Pennsylvanians to vote by mail and to have those ballots counted during the pandemic.

The American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of Pennsylvania, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Public Interest Law Center, and WilmerHale took legal action today on behalf of the NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference, Common Cause Pennsylvania, the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, and several individual voters.

They moved to intervene as defendants in a recent lawsuit brought by the Trump presidential campaign and the Republican Party. The Trump campaign lawsuit, filed June 29, is attempting, among other things, to block voters in Pennsylvania from depositing their mail ballots in drop boxes instead of mailboxes, a secure and streamlined process often used by states that conduct all-mail elections.

"The only reason the Trump campaign is trying to limit the use of mail voting is to make it more difficult for Pennsylvanians to vote. Drop boxes are a safe and efficient option for people who want to participate in our democracy, particularly in the midst of a highly contagious and deadly pandemic," **said Sarah Brannon, managing director of the ACLU's Voting Rights Project.**

The campaign is attempting to limit "Pennsylvanians' constitutionally protected right to vote by preventing the use of ballot drop-off locations," the filing charges. "A limit on the use of mail-in ballots would place unlawful and unwarranted restrictions on the time, place, and manner of voting in the November 3 elections."

Further, it would "primarily affect people of color and medically vulnerable individuals, who experience disproportionately higher rates of infection, illness, and death due to the pandemic and face grave risks to their health and the health of their communities if they vote in person."

"Our democracy works when all voters can exercise their fundamental right and cast a ballot that counts," **said Kenneth Huston, president of the NAACP Pennsylvania State**

Conference. “Accessing the ballot box is particularly challenging for many Pennsylvanians during the COVID-19 pandemic. Reducing access to the vote-by-mail process risks disenfranchising eligible voters. The NAACP has stood with Pennsylvania voters who seek to vote safely and will continue to do so here.”

“Election officials in some counties have tried to make it easier for people to vote in the middle of a pandemic, and the Trump campaign is cynically trying to undercut that effort,” **said Reggie Shuford, executive director of the ACLU of Pennsylvania.** “No matter who people want to vote for, there should be as few hurdles as possible to exercise that right.”

“The opportunity for all Pennsylvanians to vote by mail proved to be a literal lifeline in this primary. Over 1.5 million Pennsylvanians were able to cast their ballot from home, and drop boxes were a critical part of the vote-by-mail process. Voters cannot be forced to choose between their ability to vote and their health. We will continue to fight so they are never forced to make that choice and to make sure vote by mail is not turned into a partisan football,” **said Suzanne Almeida, interim executive director of Common Cause Pennsylvania.**

“Due to the ongoing global pandemic, voters must have reliable access to vote-by-mail options. As our leaders consider changes to the voting process in Pennsylvania, the League is asking to step in to ensure that the voices and needs of Pennsylvania voters are represented,” **said Terrie Griffin, co-president of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania.**

“We will not allow this partisan lawsuit to block Pennsylvania citizens’ access to the ballot box. Elections should be about maximizing voter participation, not about forcing voters to choose between their health and their suffrage,” **said Ben Geffen, staff attorney at the Philadelphia-based Public Interest Law Center.**

“At a time of a public health crisis, when every reasonable step should be taken to make voting more accessible, the Trump campaign has filed this suit to make it less accessible,” **said John Powers, counsel at the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.** “Voting is not a plaything for politicians. It is a fundamental right. It is the voters’ interests that are paramount. The organizations we represent in this motion to intervene will represent those interests, and only those interests, in this case.”

The case was filed in U.S. District Court, Western District of Pennsylvania.

Filing: <https://www.aclu.org/legal-document/filing-penn-voting-case>