



Durbin Introduces Joint Resolution To Enshrine Right To Vote In U.s. Constitution

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WASHINGTON – Ahead of the 55th anniversary of the enactment of the *Voting Rights Act*, U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee and Senate Rules Committee, introduced a joint resolution that would finally enshrine an explicit, individual right to vote in the U.S. Constitution, and protect all Americans who seek to exercise this fundamental right. Specifically, Durbin's amendment would:

- Provide an affirmative right to vote for every American citizen of legal voting age in any public election held in the jurisdiction in which they reside;
- Require that any efforts to limit the fundamental right to vote would be subject to the strictest level of review in the courts;
- Ensure that states could no longer rely on Section 2 of the Fourteenth Amendment to prevent Americans from voting due to a criminal conviction; and
- Provide that Congress has irrefutable authority to protect the right to vote through legislation.

“Some may ask why we should pursue this amendment when there are clear—and perhaps easier—steps that Congress can take right now to protect voting rights under its existing constitutional authority. Let me give you an example. The Senate could quickly pass the *John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act*, which the House passed last year. But that would rely on a decision by Senator McConnell to actually let the Senate vote on a measure coming over from the House. There's little hope that that's going to happen. Given the ongoing, ruthless assault on voting rights in America, it is clear that additional tools are necessary to push back against widespread voter suppression,” Durbin said in a speech on the Senate floor. “I recognize that amending the Constitution

is no small matter. I'm well aware that introducing this amendment isn't going to lead to any immediate change. But I also believe this moment represents the next step in a movement, a movement that will ultimately lead to the ratification of this amendment."

Durbin concluded, "Black lives matter. America matters. And our democracy matters. Once and for all, the right to vote should be enshrined in our Constitution. People have died for it. It's time for us to work hard to show that we care."

Video of Durbin's remarks on the Senate floor is available [here](#).

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Footage of Durbin's remarks on the Senate floor is available [here](#) for TV Stations.

If ratified, this amendment would protect against nefarious election administration changes that lead to long lines and reduced voter turnout on Election Day. It would protect against photo identification requirements that disproportionately harm lower-income voters and voters of color. And it would provide a path to end discriminatory criminal disenfranchisement laws that are a relic of the Jim Crow era, and yet continue to strip millions of citizens of their fundamental right to participate in our democracy.

Along with Durbin, the amendment is cosponsored by Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Ed Markey (D-MA), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT).

The amendment is endorsed by Advancement Project National Office and Rainbow PUSH Coalition.

Full text of the amendment is available [here](#).