

MICHIGAN NEEDS ITS OWN VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Despite recent progress on voting rights, Black and Brown voters, disabled voters and those whose first language is not English, still face unequal barriers to the ballot box in Michigan. As several states move backwards with severe voting restrictions and Congress lacks the will to restore the federal Voting Rights Act after the Supreme Court gutted a key component, we need Michigan to set a new standard for state-level voting rights. By enacting the Michigan Voting Rights Act (MIVRA or Senate Bills 401, 402, and 403), Michigan can become a national leader in safeguarding the right to vote, meeting a critical local need while joining the growing list of states moving forward to protect this fundamental freedom.

Michigan Voters Face Persistent Barriers to the Ballot Box

There are still discriminatory barriers to equal participation in Michigan's democracy for voters of color and people whose first language is not English. Prior to the Supreme Court's 2013 *Shelby County v. Holder* ruling, certain Michigan local governments were required to get pre-approval of voting changes under the federal Voting Rights Act based on evidence of historical racial discrimination in voting — and unfortunately, similar challenges remain today.

Troubling disparities in voter registration and turnout by race persist. For example, even in the 2020 election when more than two-thirds (68.2%) of eligible white Michiganders voted, turnout was more than 4 points lower for Black voters (63.8%), more than 13 points lower for Latino voters (54.7%), and more than 23 points lower for Asian voters (45.1%).

Despite Michigan's significant population of Arabic speakers, no state or federal law currently requires officials to provide election information to the significant portion of this population who are not comfortable speaking English. Given Michigan's highly decentralized system of election administration, the threats to the right to vote are especially severe at the local level.

Although current laws require that polling stations accommodate voters with disabilities, voters routinely report that they encounter barriers to voting and that poll workers are unfamiliar with how to operate technology needed to accommodate such voters.

The MIVRA Will Protect Voters of Color and Voters with Disabilities and Strengthen Michigan's Democracy

It's time for Michigan to set a new standard for protecting the right to vote. **The MIVRA will do just that by:**

Providing new legal tools to fight discriminatory voting rules in court.

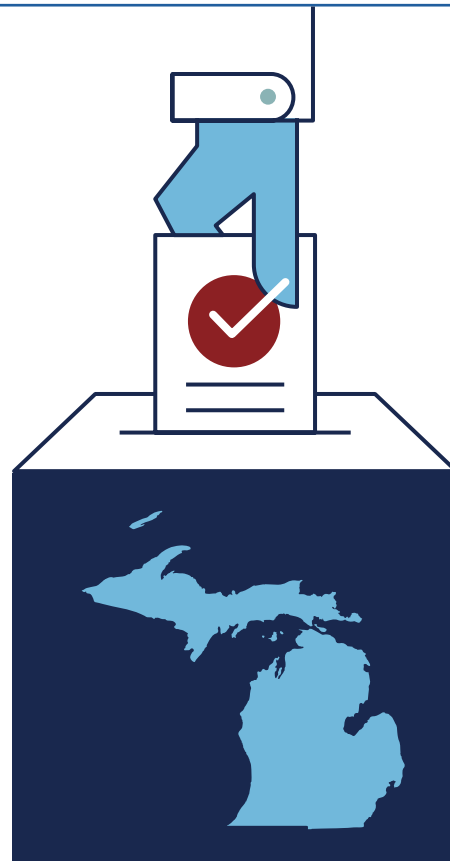
Expanding language assistance for voters with limited English proficiency.

Ensuring advanced public notice of key voting changes, enabling voters to take action.

Providing important protections and assistance for voters with disabilities.

Establishing a central hub for election information to increase transparency and promote best practices.

Requiring places where a court has found voting discrimination to prove that subsequent voting changes will not harm protected voters before they can go into effect.



The MIVRA will help Michigan to strengthen access to the ballot box at home and to become a national leader in protecting the fundamental right to vote.

The MIVRA Will Make Michigan a National Leader

If passed, the MIVRA will be one of the most comprehensive state-level voting rights acts in the country, building on successful laws already on the books in Virginia, New York, Connecticut, California, Washington, and Oregon.