



Lourdes M. Rosado
President and General Counsel

Vermont Voting Rights Act, S.298

Dear Chair Collamore, Vice-Chair Vyhovsky, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Isabelle C. Muhlbauer, and I am the National Manager of Voting Rights Advocacy Manager at LatinoJustice PRLDEF. LatinoJustice PRLDEF uses and challenges laws to create a more just and equitable society. We transform harmful systems, empower our communities, fight for racial justice, and grow the next generation of líderes. I am writing to express our strong support for the Vermont Voting Rights Act (S. 298).

Vermont has long been recognized for its commitment to making voting both accessible and secure, and the state has taken important steps in recent years to strengthen democratic participation. At the same time, the federal protections that once served as a strong backstop against voting discrimination have been significantly weakened by recent court decisions. As a result, voters of color, older voters, voters with disabilities, and voters with limited English proficiency will undoubtedly encounter growing barriers to the ballot. Immediate state action is critical to ensuring these voters remain fully protected under Vermont law.

A strong Vermont Voting Rights Act will: (1) equip voters and advocates with meaningful legal tools to challenge discriminatory voting practices in court; (2) expand language access and assistance so voters with limited English proficiency can fully participate in elections; (3) establish clear protections against intimidation, deception, and obstruction at the polls for both voters and election workers; (4) create accountability measures to monitor jurisdictions that have violated voters' rights and prevent repeat harms; and (5) ensure that state and local voting rules do not undermine the ability of voters of color and other protected communities to cast their ballots freely.

LatinoJustice has a long history of advocating for expanded language access in elections through litigation, policy advocacy, and community education. We believe that no voter should face obstacles to participation because of the language they speak. The VTVRA's commitment to expanding language access beyond federal requirements is a crucial step in ensuring equitable access to the ballot for all Vermonters.

As federal voting rights protections continue to erode, Vermont must step forward to safeguard the fundamental right to vote. This legislation offers a meaningful way to ensure equal access to the ballot for all voters in Vermont.

LatinoJustice strongly urges this Committee to pass S 298, the Vermont Voting Rights Act.

Sincerely,

Isabelle Muhlbauer
National Manager of Voting Rights Advocacy

475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1901
New York, NY 10027
212-219-3360
800-328-2322

4700 Millenia Blvd., Suite 500
Orlando, FL 32839
321-250-2853

611 S. Congress Ave., Ste. 4500
Austin, TX 78704
512-649-9129

latinojustice.org