



May 19, 2023

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
 The Capitol
 400 S. Monroe St.
 Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: SB 7050: Election Administration Veto Request

Governor DeSantis,

The Florida Legislature recently passed Senate Bill 7050, which is now before you for consideration. As voting and civil rights organizations in Florida, we strongly urge you to veto this anti-voter bill that would do widespread harm to Florida's elections and third-party voter registration organizations (3PVRO).

SB 7050 shifts the responsibility to verify if a person is eligible to register or vote solely to the voter while failing to provide proper tools from the State to facilitate this process. During session, legislators refused to provide real solutions for individuals who have doubts about their

eligibility, and instead opted to include a disclaimer on the voter information card to try to protect the state from liability. This does not address the root problem, as it will still lead most reasonable people to believe that by receiving a voter information card, they have been cleared by the state to vote. The disclaimer language is part of an ongoing effort by the State to deny any responsibility in helping voters to determine their eligibility. The state must provide resources for voters to determine their eligibility in an accessible and timely manner. The current eligibility advisories offered by the Department of State are not well advertised and they take from two weeks to four months based on a review of 2023 advisories posted by the Florida Division of Elections.¹

We are also concerned with the harmful and discriminatory impacts SB 7050 will have on third-party voter registration organizations as they are targeted for the third year in a row. SB 7050 will have a chilling effect on voter registration groups while raising barriers to the ballot for communities of color. This bill, yet again, exponentially raises the fines that can be imposed on these groups and arbitrarily reduces the time to deliver collected application forms. It also limits who community organizations can employ or recruit as volunteers for voter registration operations by capriciously prohibiting non-US citizens from “collecting or handling” voter registration application forms on behalf of these organizations, even if they are legally authorized to work in the United States. This will inevitably result in the loss of a large segment of the workforce and volunteers that are able to connect with potential voters who face language barriers and need assistance navigating the voter registration process. The receipt requirement is also likely to create confusion as the bill will be in effect as of July 1st of this year while the Department has until October 1st to create a standardized receipt through administrative rule-making.

SB 7050 also harms voter accessibility by reducing the time a voter has to request a vote-by-mail ballot be mailed to them. The new deadline will be 12 days before an election, which takes away 2 full days from the current deadline. It will also require voters or their designees to present an emergency affidavit if they want to request a vote-by-mail ballot during the early voting period. Previously, this emergency affidavit was only necessary if the ballot was being picked up on election day. The bill also fails to address the needs of voters with disabilities who have a right to receive an accessible vote-by-mail ballot through electronic means.

Additionally, SB 7050 will now require Supervisors of Elections and the Division of Elections to receive weekly reports from the Clerk of Courts regarding returning citizens, those adjudicated mentally incapacitated, address change information from jury notices, and information regarding terms of sentence for felony convictions. However, the bill does not provide Supervisors of Elections with the resources needed to analyze this data with this frequency.

In the budget process, the legislature has failed to provide funding for voter education and outreach over the last few years, despite instituting many changes in the election process that impact voters. No funds were provided for the implementation of this bill to enable Supervisors of Elections and other organizations to share important and consequential information with voters. In conjunction with the new restrictions on third-party voter registration organizations, the lack of investment in outreach will result in fewer opportunities for eligible Floridians, and especially those who lack a Florida state ID, to be able to register to vote.

¹ <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/laws-rules/advisory-opinions/advisory-opinions-by-year/>

Throughout this legislative session, SB 7050 focused on measures restricting their constituents' freedom to vote and rejected many changes that would have expanded access and made voting more accessible for all eligible Floridians. For example, creating a database to verify voter eligibility, expanding language accessibility across the state, and allowing more time for voter registration before an election. We stand ready to collaborate with you and your administration on efforts such as these.

As you have acknowledged, Florida elections are safe and secure. Election officials and the Florida Secretary of State agree. The provisions in this bill undermine our democracy and are unnecessary. On behalf of Florida citizens, we ask that you stand up for free, fair, and accessible elections and veto SB 7050. We are happy to answer any questions you and your staff may have.

Sincerely,

Brad Ashwell Florida State Director All Voting is Local Action	Roberto Cruz Southeast Managing Director Latino Justice PRLDEF	Jasmine Burney-Clark Executive Director, Equal Ground Action Fund
Amy Keith Program Director, Common Cause Florida	Angie Nixon Executive Director Florida For All	Letitia Harmon Policy and Research Director Florida Rising
Adora Obi Nweze President NAACP FL State Conference	Michele Eiger State Organizer Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC)	Felipe Sousa-Lazaballet Executive Director Hope CommUnity Center
Peter Sleasman Executive Director Disability Rights Florida	Marlene Sallo Executive Director National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)	Mark Ferrulo Executive Director Progress Florida
Carolina Wassmer Florida State Program Director Poder Latinx	Sarah Emmons Regional Director ADL Florida	May Thach Florida Organizing Manager National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
Marcos Vilar Executive Director Alianza for Progress	Alex Berrios Co-Founder Mi Vecino	Carolyn Thompson Voter Protection Advocate Advancement Project
Godfre Blackman The Legal Defense Fund ("LDF")	Cassandra Brown Co-Founder, Executive Director All About the Ballots	Aurelie Colon Larrauri FL State Policy Advocate Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice FL

Jonathan Webber Florida Policy Director SPLC Action Fund	Juanica Fernandes Executive Director State Voices Florida	Osvaldo Fonseca Engagement Manager Del Ambiente
Alyssa Cundari Roelans Executive Director SEIU Florida	Benjamin Frazier President Northside Coalition of Jacksonville	Kirk Bailey Political Director ACLU of Florida
Soraya Marquez State Director Mi Familia Vota	Rosemary McCoy CEO Harriet Tubman Freedom Fighters	Ryan Snow Counsel, Voting Rights Project Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
Ana Sofia Pelaez Executive Director Miami Freedom Project	Tark Aouadi Executive Director Emgage Florida	Jody Rabhan Chief Policy Officer National Council of Jewish Women
Emily Gorman, Florida Chapter Director Sierra Club	Lulu Friesdat Founder and Executive Director SMART Legislation	Jamil Davis State Organizing Manager Black Voters Matter Fund
Laudi Campo Florida State Director Hispanic Federation		

AVLA & Partners:

1. LatinoJustice PRLDEF
2. Equal Ground
3. Common Cause
4. Florida for All
5. Florida Rising
6. NAACP Florida State Conference
7. Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC)
8. Hope CommUnity Center
9. Disability Rights Florida
10. National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
11. Progress Florida
12. Poder Latinx
13. ADL Florida
14. National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
15. Alianza for Progress
16. Mi Vecino
17. Advancement Project

18. The Legal Defense Fund ("LDF")
19. All About the Ballots
20. Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice FL
21. SPLC Action Fund
22. State Voices Florida
23. Del Ambiente
24. Sierra Club
25. Northside Coalition of Jacksonville
26. ACLU Florida
27. Mi Familia Vota
28. Harriet Tubman Freedom Fighters
29. Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
30. Miami Freedom Project
31. Engage Florida
32. National Council of Jewish Women
33. SEIU Florida
34. SMART Legislation
35. BVM
36. Hispanic Federation

Cc: FSE