

Statement on Voting Rights by Higher Education Organizations

April 13, 2021

“Our educational institutions aspire to help create a just, vibrant, and democratic society. Colleges and universities believe that fostering informed civic engagement is a central goal of a postsecondary education. We teach students that there is no more important or better way to nourish a flourishing democracy than by encouraging all eligible voters to exercise their right to cast a ballot for the candidates of their choice.

We back up our rhetoric with action. Colleges often lead voter registration drives, serve as polling places in their communities, and act as the public square for important civic conversations. Indeed, every one of the presidential and vice presidential debates held in this century has been on a college campus. Students themselves often play critical roles in these efforts. College students were at the forefront of the struggle to ensure that the constitutional right of Black citizens to vote was upheld in states and communities that sought to curtail those rights. The cost of that work was measured in ballots cast, but also in blood and lives lost.

Expanding suffrage to include all citizens is a hallmark of American history. While not rapid, smooth, or easy, four separate constitutional amendments and landmark legislation such as the Voting Rights Act of 1965 have enabled more Americans to participate in our democracy.

For these reasons, just as the integrity of our electoral system is essential, we strongly oppose the many efforts currently underway across the nation to suppress voting by qualified voters. We stand with all who seek to expand rather than restrict voting and civic participation. We are particularly concerned with proposals that would roll back some of that progress by raising barriers to student voting, including prohibiting students from using their campus addresses to register or qualify for absentee ballots.

Exercising the right to vote should not be controversial or challenging. The right to vote defines us as a nation. We call on lawmakers to take action to ensure that civic participation in America continues to move forward, not backward, and that the United States has the most inclusive and equitable democracy in the world.”

On behalf of:

Achieving the Dream
ACPA-College Student Educators International
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Association of University Professors
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Council on Education
American Dental Education Association

American Indian Higher Education Association
APPA, "Leadership in Educational Facilities"
Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors
Association of American Colleges and Universities
Association of American Universities
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Pennsylvania
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Research Libraries
Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Coalition of Urban & Metropolitan Universities
Common App
Council for Advancement and Support of Education
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Council for Opportunity in Education
Council of Graduate Schools
Council of Independent Colleges
Council on Social Work Education
EDUCAUSE
ETS
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
NAFSA: Association of International Educators
NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Colleges and Employers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
National Collegiate Athletic Association
Phi Beta Kappa Society
Physician Assistant Education Association
TMCF