



STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE DEMOCRACY RESTORATION ACT

WHEREAS the Coalition of Bar Associations of Color (CBAC), organized in 1983, is a coalition created to act as a collective voice for issues of common concern to its member organizations; and

WHEREAS the member organizations of the Coalition of Bar Associations of Color are the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA), the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), the National Bar Association (NBA), and the National Native American Bar Association (NNABA); and

WHEREAS, 5.3 million U.S. citizens are denied the right to vote because of criminal convictions, with nearly 4 million of those people already out of prison;

WHEREAS, the patchwork of felony disenfranchisement laws among the states has contributed to misperceptions and misinformation, including the misunderstanding that many eligible voters are barred from voting, compounding the issue of disenfranchisement;

WHEREAS, individuals who have completed their prison terms would be better able to reintegrate into and positively contribute to society if they were able to fully participate in the decisions impacting their communities and families;

WHEREAS, felony disenfranchisement laws are relics of the Jim Crow era and today perpetuate discrimination by disproportionately impacting communities of color, who face higher rates of incarceration than on average;

WHEREAS, the Fifteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act both prohibit the denial or abridgement of the right of any U.S. citizen to vote because of race or color;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court has said that the “franchise of voting” is a “fundamental political right” and “preservative of all rights”; and

WHEREAS, the exclusion of millions of U.S. citizens from access to the electoral process critically undermines America’s democracy.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Coalition of Bar of Association of Color supports the passage of the Democracy Restoration Act, legislation that would establish a federal standard to restore voting rights in federal elections to the disenfranchised who have been released from prison.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the legislative priority of the Coalition of Bar Associations of Color until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

WE, the duly-elected Presidents of the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA), the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), the National Bar Association (NBA), and the National Native American Bar Association (NNABA), hereby certify that they foregoing Resolution was duly enacted by a duly-noticed meetings of the Board of Directors.



Diana Sen
President, Hispanic National Bar Association

Date

Paul O. Hirose
President, National Asian Pacific American Bar Association

Date

Demetrius Shelton
President, National Bar Association

Date

Mary Smith
President-Elect, National Native American Bar Association

Date