



RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE DEMOCRACY RESTORATION ACT

Endorsed July 2014

WHEREAS, the Coalition of Bar Associations of Color (CBAC), organized in 1992, 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 them already out of prison; and

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; and

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; and

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 (for example, 13 percent of African American men – nearly seven times the national average – are currently unable to vote because of a criminal conviction); and

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; and

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; and

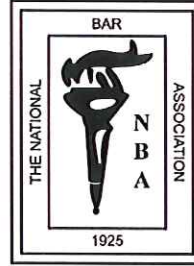
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that CBAC supports the passage of the Democracy Restoration Act and the Voter Empowerment Act, which incorporates the Democracy Restoration Act. This legislation would establish a federal standard to restore voting rights in federal elections to the disenfranchised who have been released from prison and are now living in their communities; and

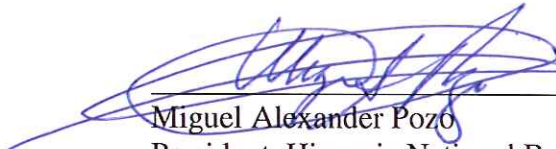
NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that CBAC authorizes its officers and staff to communicate the content of this resolution to its members, affiliates, other bar associations, members of Congress, the Administration, the press, and others to take steps to implement this resolution, as they deem necessary; and

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 the foregoing Resolution was duly enacted by a duly noticed meeting of the Board of Directors.





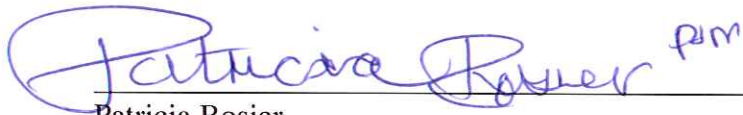
 Miguel Alexander Pozo
 President, Hispanic National Bar Association

July 15, 2014
 Date



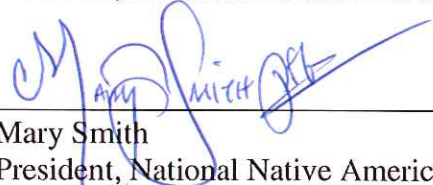
 William J. Simonitsch
 President, National Asian Pacific American Bar Association

July 15, 2014
 Date



 Patricia Rosier
 President, National Bar Association

July 15, 2014
 Date



 Mary Smith
 President, National Native American Bar Association

15 July 2014
 Date

