

Democracy Reform

A fundamental pillar of a just democracy is the assurance that all have the opportunity to participate in a fair and equal democratic process. However, the rise of money in politics and barriers to the ballot box have made it increasingly difficult for America's working families to have their voices heard. CWA is committed to an election process that empowers workers and reduces the influence of Wall Street. To that end, we endorse the following legislation that will ensure our democracy is truly of, by, and for the people:

For the People Act (H.R. 1)

In 2010, the Supreme Court opened the floodgates to dark money in our political system by way of their ruling in *Citizens United* and *McCutcheon v. FEC*. Consequently, corporations were granted the First Amendment right to spend unlimited, undisclosed amounts of money to influence American elections and policy. To counter this, House Democrats led the passage of the *For the People Act* (H.R. 1) in the House, but it is still awaiting action in the Senate.

Among other things, this bill would expand voting rights and ensure a government that functions for the people. Specifically it:

- Implements automatic, online, and same day voter registration;
- Makes election day a federal holiday
- Expands early voting and simplifies absentee voting
- Requires secret money organizations that fund elections to disclose their donors
- Upgrades online political spending transparency rules to ensure voters know who is paying for the advertisements they see
- Strengthens anti-corruption rules such as banning members of Congress from serving on corporate boards

This bill would go a long way to leveling the playing field to make working people's voices heard in the democratic process.

Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 4)

The *Voting Rights Act of 1965* (VRA) was instrumental in responding to the discriminatory practices that prevented many citizens from voting. In its 54 years, the VRA has made easier access to voting a reality for millions by reducing voter suppression, removing barriers to political participation, and

eliminating many discriminatory practices within the electoral system. The VRA was pivotal then and remains critical today.

The Supreme Court's ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder* significantly undermined the VRA, leaving many open to the same harmful practices that warranted its existence. After the Shelby ruling, some states began to shorten early voting windows and increase their use of photo ID requirements, directly harming working families whose capacity to vote is already limited.

The *Voting Rights Advancement Act* (H.R. 4) would establish nationwide preclearance standards, which is a process for reviewing voting changes in jurisdictions that have historically discriminated against communities of color. It would also create a new coverage formula for detecting repeated instances of voting rights violations in the previous 25 years.

This bill also passed the House in 2019, but we still need action in the Senate. Unfortunately, Senate Republican leadership has stagnated the progress of these bills by refusing to bring them to the Senate floor for a vote. We must continue to fight for these necessary changes to our democracy to ensure that we can pass future legislation that strengthens our power in the workplace like bills to prevent call center offshoring, protect our right to unionize, and rein in the power of Wall Street.