



December 3, 2020

RE: Demos Support for H.R.1, H.R.4, and H.R.51

Dear Senator or Representative:

We write in strong support of the *For the People Act* (H.R.1/S.949), the transformational pro-democracy legislative package that will clear obstacles to full and equal participation for Black and brown voters, and diversify and democratize the political donor base that determines who runs for office and who wins elections in the United States.

Demos is a national public policy organization working to build power for Black and brown communities, and to build a small donor democracy where the strength of a voter's voice does not depend upon the size of her wallet.

We strongly urge you to prioritize passing H.R.1 along with the *John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act* (H.R.4) and legislation granting statehood to Washington, D.C. (H.R.51) as the first items of business in the 117th Congress. Immediate action will send a clear message that strengthening our democracy is necessary to address the many challenges we currently face as a nation--from the racialized impact of COVID-19 to the unequal burdens of climate change.

The critical reforms in the *For the People Act* enjoy deep and broad public support. For this reason, H.R.1 passed the House of Representatives with unanimous Democratic support in March 2019 and was cosponsored by all members of the Senate Democratic Caucus. President-elect Joe Biden has stated that a "first priority" of his administration will be to lead on a comprehensive set of democracy solutions; and [House](#) and [Senate](#) Democratic leaders have similarly said they will prioritize this once-in-a-generation legislation. Speaker Nancy Pelosi recently reiterated her strong support for the *For the People Act* by saying the House "will proudly pass our election reform, anti-corruption and voting rights legislation by passing H.R.1 on the first day of the new Congress."

The 2020 election has underscored the urgent need for transformational democracy reform. Across the nation, Black and brown voters once again engaged in heroic efforts to overcome sustained voter suppression to make their voices heard, this time against the backdrop of a global pandemic and the heightened threat of white supremacist violence and intimidation. Despite encouraging growth in small donor participation, the white, wealthy donor class still accounted for far too much of the \$14 billion spent on federal elections this year.

The policies in H.R.1, H.R.4, and H.R.51 work together to safeguard the right to vote, including pushing back on the scourge of discriminatory voter suppression; bring us closer to one-person, one-vote representation in Congress; end the dominance of big money in politics by empowering working families to make their voices heard; and establish stronger ethical controls to clean up government.

Without structural democracy reform, we simply cannot effectively fight structural racism and economic inequality. Curbing the runaway student debt that disproportionately plagues Black and brown borrowers, achieving climate equity, expanding affordable healthcare, stopping the spread of COVID-19, and promoting economic recovery while reducing racial wealth disparities all require a thriving democracy where people power can overcome entrenched special interests.

Again, Demos asks you to ensure that the *For the People Act* (H.R.1), along with the *John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act* (H.R.4) and legislation granting statehood to Washington, D.C. (H.R.51) are first priorities when the new Congress is convened.

We also urge that you not stop there. Beyond this initial package of profound reforms, Congress must take up the Native American Voting Rights Act; reform and expand our broken judiciary; recognize self-determination in our territories; help build strong civic infrastructure by making it easier for workers to band together; and more. Only by continuing the work to build a more inclusive democracy can we address our biggest challenges and live up to our highest ideals.

Please follow up with Senior Policy Analyst Laura Williamson (lwilliamson@demos.org) or Senior Counsel Adam Lioz (alioz@demos.org) with any questions, or to discuss how we can work with your office on this matter.

Sincerely,

K. Sabeel Rahman, President
Demos