

March 2, 2023



The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human
Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Miguel Cardona
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

The Honorable Robin Carnahan
Administrator
U.S. General Services Administration
1800 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20405

The Honorable Ronald L. Davis
Director
U.S. Marshals Service
1215 S. Clark Street
Arlington, VA 22202

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Ur M. Jaddou
Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services 5900
Capital Gateway Drive
Camp Springs, MD 20746

The Honorable Denis McDonough
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

The Honorable Colette S. Peters
Director
Federal Bureau of Prisons
320 First Street, NW
Washington, DC 20534

The Honorable Roselyn Tso
Director
U.S. Indian Health Services
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

The Honorable Janet Yellen
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20220

Dear President Biden, Secretary Becerra, Secretary Cardona, Administrator Carnahan, Director Davis, Secretary Haaland, Director Jaddou, Secretary McDonough, Director Peters, Director Tso, and Secretary Yellen,



On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 230 national organizations committed to promoting and protecting the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, and nearly 100 undersigned organizations, we write to emphasize the urgency for your departments and agencies to fully implement President Biden’s Executive Order Promoting Access to Voting before the end of this term.

The right to vote is the foundation of our democracy. For many Americans, however, it is becoming increasingly difficult to register to vote and cast a ballot. Voter registration remains a hurdle for many eligible voters, particularly people of color. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 77 percent of white eligible voters are registered to vote, compared to only 69 percent of Black eligible voters, 61 percent of Latinx eligible voters, 64 percent of Asian American eligible voters, and 63 percent of Native American eligible voters.¹ In the last presidential election, more than 63 million eligible voters were not registered to vote.²

As organizations representing a vibrant, diverse democracy movement — including health, immigration, labor, racial justice, environmental, education, disability rights, housing, justice reform, LGBTQ rights, faith-based, and voting rights organizations — we thank President Biden for highlighting the threats facing the American people and our democracy in his recent State of the Union address. We wholeheartedly agree: Now is the time to finish the job and protect and promote our democracy. It is critical that the president continue to use the power of the presidency to expand access to the ballot and safeguard our democracy from those who wish to destroy it.

We want to praise President Biden’s efforts to expand voter registration opportunities through the Executive Order on Promoting Access to Voting (Voting Access EO), signed on the anniversary of the Selma voting rights march in 2021. The EO represents a visionary, whole-of-government approach to expanding voter registration opportunities throughout federal agency programs and helping to overcome the obstacles that prevent many within our respective communities from registering to vote. With congressional action on voting rights now facing a difficult path forward, strong implementation of this EO is one of the most impactful actions the Biden-Harris administration can take to secure the right to vote for all eligible Americans.

There is still much to do to realize the full potential of the Voting Access EO. **A recent report — [Strengthening Democracy: A Progress Report on Federal Agency Action to Promote Access to Voting](#) — commemorating the two-year anniversary of the Voting Access EO’s announcement shows that while a few federal agencies are on the right track to completing implementation, several others have fallen behind and risk not achieving the Voting Access EO’s potential before the end of 2024.** The attached report focuses on 10 federal agencies, which were selected based on their potential for promoting access to registration and voting for large populations, feasibility of voter registration in their agency context, direct interaction with the public, and ability to reach marginalized communities in our political system — especially people of color, people with disabilities, Native Americans, people with

¹ United States Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey*, November 2020.

² Ibid.

limited English proficiency, newly naturalized citizens, students, people with low incomes, and people directly impacted by the criminal-legal system.

Three agencies — the Department of Interior, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Treasury — are on the right track to complete implementation and fully integrate voter registration services into their everyday interactions with the public. We applaud these agencies for their demonstrated commitment to promoting access to voting for the people they serve. These programs will provide significant voter registration opportunities for Native Americans, veterans, and voters with low incomes.

However, we are concerned that seven agencies have slowed or stalled in their progress to implement the Voting Access EO. Accordingly, we urge the Biden-Harris administration to carry out the recommendations outlined in the report to fulfill the mandate of the EO, including:

- **Department of Health and Human Services:** Ensure the integration of a voter registration opportunity into the Healthcare.gov application is fully operational by the Fall 2023 open enrollment period; and launch the promised voting information hub for older adults and people with disabilities.
- **U.S. Marshals Service, Department of Justice:** Ensure all eligible individuals in federal pre-trial custody have access to high quality voter registration services and assistance voting; make public the results of any internal assessments on these efforts; and leverage its contracts to ensure ballot access for all eligible voters, not just those in federal custody.
- **Bureau of Prisons, Department of Justice:** Ensure all eligible individuals in federal prison across the country can access registration and voting services; and ensure that high-quality information about voting rights is consistently provided during incarceration and upon release.
- **General Services Administration:** Ensure Vote.gov is a user-friendly and accessible resource for all voters, regardless of disability status, language, conviction history, and geography.
- **Indian Health Services, Department of Health and Human Services:** Provide high-quality voter registration services, including assistance, at Indian Health Services facilities; and work with interested tribes to support voter registration opportunities at health facilities run by tribes.
- **Department of Education:** Improve voter registration opportunities for students at institutions of higher learning, including adding voter registration opportunities to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid “Student Aid Report.”
- **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security:** Ensure all new citizens have access to high-quality voter registration services at or immediately after all naturalization ceremonies.

In conclusion, strong implementation of the Voting Access EO throughout the federal government would provide additional voter registration opportunities for millions of eligible voters. We urge the Biden-Harris administration to make fulfilling the promise of the Executive Order on Promoting Access to Voting a top priority in the final two years of this term. Now is the time to finish the job by fully implementing this administration’s strong commitment to protecting the right to vote and to ensure all federal agencies are prepared to support their constituents in participating in our democracy.



We appreciate your commitment to protecting the fundamental right to vote, especially as we prepare to commemorate the 58th anniversary of the Selma march. If you have any questions, please contact Leslie Proll, senior director of the voting rights program at The Leadership Conference, at proll@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Advancement Project
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
All Voting is Local Action
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Civil Liberties Union
American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees
American Public Health Association
Andrew Goodman Foundation
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC
Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Black Voters Matter Fund
Brennan Center for Justice
Campaign Legal Center
Center for Disability Rights
Clean Water Action
Climate Hawks Vote
Common Cause
Declaration for American Democracy Coalition
Democracy 21
Demos
Earthjustice
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities
End Citizens United/Let America Vote
Fair Elections Center
Fair Fight Action
FairVote Action
Faith in Public Life
Friends of the Earth
GLSEN

Greenpeace USA
Healthy Democracy Healthy People
Hip Hop Caucus
Hispanic Federation
Human Rights Campaign
Indivisible
Japanese American Citizens League
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
League of Conservation Voters
League of Women Voters of the United States
Mi Familia Vota
Movement Advancement Project
NAACP
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF)
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Asian Pacific Americans Against Substance Abuse
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Community Action Partnership
National Congress of American Indians
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA)
National Housing Law Project
National Network for Arab American Communities
National Network of Public Health Institutes
National Partnership for New Americans
National Wildlife Federation
Native American Rights Fund
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
Network for Public Health Law
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
People For the American Way
Planned Parenthood Action Fund
Presbyterian Church (USA) Office of Public Witness
Prison Policy Initiative
Promise of Democracy Foundation
Public Citizen
Public Health Accreditation Board
SHK Global Health

Sierra Club
Society for Humanistic Judaism
Society for Public Health Education
Sojourners
South Asian Public Health Association
SPLC Action Fund
Stand Up America
State Voices
The Arc of the United States
The Workers Circle
Transformative Justice Coalition
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
UnidosUS
Union for Reform Judaism
Union of Concerned Scientists
United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries
Verified Voting
Vot-ER & Civic Health Month
Young Invincibles



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

March 27, 2023

Leslie Proll
Senior Director, Voting Rights Program
The Leadership Conference on Civil
and Human Rights
1620 L Street, NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Ms. Proll:

Thank you for your March 2, 2023 letter requesting that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) ensure all new citizens have access to high-quality voter registration services at or immediately after all naturalization ceremonies.

USCIS strives to give all newly naturalized citizens the opportunity to register at the end of naturalization ceremonies it holds, and voter registration information and additional resources for newly naturalized Americans are available on the USCIS website for [New U.S. Citizens](#). USCIS distributes a Voter's Guide to Federal Elections as a part of its Welcome Packet provided to every naturalization candidate participating in its ceremonies. In Fiscal Year 2022 alone, USCIS administered the Oath of Allegiance for 967,400 new Americans, across more than 20,000 naturalization ceremonies and an increasing number of oaths taken on the same day as the naturalization interview.

As of March 5, 2023, USCIS has committed to issuing updated policy guidance to standardize and lift up best practices for voter registration services, including providing a clear roadmap for our local field offices conducting naturalization ceremonies in different states across different jurisdictions to successfully partner with state and local election administration officials and nonpartisan organizations to offer voter registration information and services at naturalization ceremonies, and the provision of voter registration applications to all new Americans.

USCIS will continue to explore additional ways to ensure that new Americans have full access to the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship, including the right to vote.

Thank you again for your letter. Please share this response with the other organizations that cosigned your letter. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ur M. Jaddou" followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Ur M. Jaddou
Director