



Center for Ethics Statement on Voting Rights Legislation in Georgia

We, the faculty and staff of the Emory University Center for Ethics, have deep concerns about the bills in the Georgia state legislature which would affect the ability of Georgians, especially those from already marginalized communities, to exercise their federal right to vote. The abundantly foreseeable consequences of these bills will do far more harm to Georgians than any good their authors claim.

Advocates assert that these bills will improve trust in the overall voting system and ensure election integrity. However, there is no evidence that systemic or widespread fraud occurred in the latest election cycles here in Georgia or anywhere else in the United States. Indeed, no court in the United States found pervasive problems during the last election, and none has been found in any statewide election in Georgia. All reliable evidence resoundingly shows that the elections were fair and secure; this is fact. Consequently, proponents of these bills are promoting changes for problems that do not exist, while magnifying long-standing inequities in our community.

Strong and reliable evidence demonstrates that these bills will disproportionately and negatively impact minority and poor communities. The barriers the legislation erects for the increasingly diverse voting population in Georgia make it more difficult for many to register to vote, request absentee ballots, receive ballots, return ballots, or to show up to vote in person. For black and brown communities and especially those in densely populated areas, these bills make it harder to exercise their federal right to vote. This is the most significant legislative attempt to restrict the voting of minority citizens since the Jim Crow laws of the 19th century.

Because facts and consequences matter most when passing legislation, legislators of integrity should evaluate a bill based not by what its sponsors say their intentions are but by the facts and what the law's likely impact will be. We therefore strongly oppose the bills currently in the legislative process that will restrict Georgians' voting rights, and urge our legislators to reject such efforts and their divisive consequences.