



Policy Proposal: Expanding Civil Rights Protections (Part I: Racial Discrimination)

Published: April 14, 2026

New legislation is required to undo the effects of decades of conservative court rulings and to restore the original intent of our nation's civil rights laws.

Fighting for civil rights at the moment....it's hard to know where to start.

Let's start here:

- Voting: one of the most fundamental rights in a democracy – and the most significant way that a community can ensure that their interests are represented in government – is voting.
 - o The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was written to ensure minority voters could participate equally in our democratic process; specifically, it prohibited discriminatory voting practices and eliminated many of the barriers to voting.
 - o In 2013, the Supreme Court (in the case *Shelby County v. Holder*) invalidated a key enforcement mechanism that required states with a history of voting discrimination to clear any changes to voting laws/practices with federal officials.
 - o Since then, we've seen behavior like changing district boundaries to reduce the political sway of specific groups and changing polling sites at the last minute to prevent voters from knowing how to vote.
 - o The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act – reintroduced in the House last year – would address the Supreme Court's concerns by, among other things, updating the formula that decides which locations have a pattern of discrimination, requiring 180 days' notice for all voting changes, and expanding the federal government's ability to send election observers where needed.
 - o This bill has the support of every Democrat and should be passed

That's a great start – what's next?

Other legislation could reaffirm that disparate impact can be cause for a claim of discrimination, rather than only (the much more difficult to demonstrate) discriminatory intent.



At the same time, we can broaden the definition of race to include traits that have historically been associated with race (e.g., natural hair textures).

The Justice for All Act of 2025 would address both of those and more; that bill is pending in the House and has not been cosponsored by Rep. Clarke.

Another bill that has previously been drafted – the End Racial and Religious Profiling Act – would prohibit federal, state, and local law enforcement from targeting a person based on actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation. If elected, I would plan to reintroduce this crucial legislation.

The Supreme Court has worked tirelessly to undermine critical pieces of civil rights legislation. New laws are desperately needed to undo those harms.

I'll work tirelessly in Congress to reassert the power of the legislative branch, to target the multitude of ways that Republicans have sought to discriminate against fellow Americans, and to tamper-proof civil rights for generations to come.



Sources include:

- <https://www.hrc.org/resources/end-racial-religious-profiling-act>
- <https://www.hrc.org/resources/voting-rights-advancement-act>
- <https://tlaib.house.gov/posts/tlaib-clever-lee-introduce-justice-for-all-civil-rights-act>
- <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1354>
- <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/3552>