

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 3, 2015

The Honorable Loretta Lynch
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Lynch:

We write to request a formal audit detailing state level compliance and federal enforcement of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA).

Our representative democracy is threatened by chronically low levels of voter turnout. In 2014, only thirty-six percent of eligible voters cast ballots, the lowest turnout since WWII. Even more alarming is the income disparity between voters and non-voters. In 2012, sixty-two percent of those making \$150,000 a year or more voted, while only twenty-seven percent of those earning less than \$10,000 a year voted.

The federal government should be doing more to ensure that our political system works for all Americans. A healthy democracy requires the highest possible rate of voter participation. One of the most successful ways to increase voter participation is to simplify the voter registration process.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of implementation of the National Voter Registration Act. The goal of the NVRA is to simplify the voter registration process and make it more accessible by requiring voter registration services to be provided where government delivers public services to its citizens. Since 1995, states subject to the NVRA have offered citizens the opportunity to register to vote whenever they obtain a driver's license or apply for Medicaid, and in some states, at public libraries. Unfortunately, data suggests that voter registration at places like the Department of Motor Vehicles has remained stagnant in the twenty years that the NVRA has been in effect. This suggests significant problems with implementation, compliance and enforcement.

Studies indicate that failure to comply with and properly enforce the NVRA has translated to millions of missed opportunities to register Americans to vote.¹

We write to request an audit of the NVRA that addresses the following questions:

1. How is state compliance with the NVRA currently measured, and what data is collected and reported?
2. What is the federal response to states that fail to comply with NVRA requirements?
3. What kind of training is provided by state and federal officials to social service providers that are charged with implementing NVRA?
4. The NVRA stipulates that voter registration services must be provided where government delivers public services. What measures is the DOJ taking to ensure that the NVRA is being implemented elsewhere beyond the Department of Motor Vehicles?
5. What states are registering the most voters through the NVRA and how are their best practices being observed and implemented in states failing to register voters?

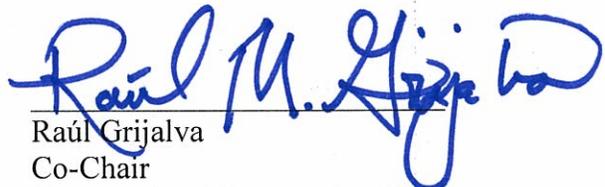
After twenty years, it is time to analyze the NVRA's effects and implement meaningful changes to ensure that the goals set forth twenty years ago are being met.

We look forward to working with you on the important issue of improving access to voter registration.

Sincerely,



Keith Ellison
Co-Chair
Congressional Progressive Caucus



Raúl Grijalva
Co-Chair
Congressional Progressive Caucus



Mike Honda
Vice-Chair
Congressional Progressive Caucus

¹ Naifeh, S. Driving the Vote: Are States Complying with the Motor Voter Requirements of the National Voter Registration Act? February 5, 2015. <http://www.demos.org/publication/driving-vote-are-states-complying-motor-voter-requirements-national-voter-registration-a>