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December 4, 2019

United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 3 million members of the National Education Association who work in 14,000 communities across the nation, we urge you to vote YES on the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019 (H.R. 4) because it will protect our most fundamental right as citizens and safeguard the integrity of our democracy. Votes on this issue may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 116th Congress.

The U.S. Supreme Court in *Shelby v. Holder* invalidated a crucial provision in the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that prevented states with a history of discriminating against voters from changing their voting laws and practices without preclearance by federal officials. This federal review was an important feature of the Voting Rights Act; doing away with it has virtually annulled the federal oversight that was—and remains—crucial to ensuring that millions of people have equal access to the ballot box. Since the *Shelby* decision, several states have changed their voting practices in ways that have created barriers for people of color, low-income people, transgender people, college students, the elderly, and those with disabilities. The Voting Rights Advancement Act reverses this dangerous, undemocratic trend by taking several steps that include:

- Modernizing the Voting Rights Act so that preclearance covers states and localities with a recent pattern of discrimination;
- Requiring jurisdictions to publicly disclose, 180 days before an election, all voting changes, such as reductions in language assistance and changes in requirements to vote or register; and
- Authorizing the Attorney General, either on Election Day or during early voting, to send federal observers to any jurisdiction where there is a substantial risk of racial discrimination at the polls.

NEA members live, work, and vote in every precinct, county, and congressional district in the United States. They take their obligation to vote seriously, viewing it as essential to protecting the opportunities that they believe all students should have. Educators teach students that voting is a responsibility of citizenship, a privilege people have died to protect, and a right we must dedicate ourselves to upholding. We urge you to vote YES on the Voting Rights Advancement Act so that all may participate in the electoral process and have a voice in our democracy.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association