

Mr. President,

During your campaign and presidency, you promised to change the laws that enabled continued discrimination as you took aim at the ugly poisons of systemic racism and white supremacy that have long plagued the United States. Nothing is more emblematic of the structural systems that oppress Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous communities than the effort to restrict voting. From unlawfully purging voters to making voting by mail harder, anti-voting laws are essentially death by a thousand cuts. Our right to vote is under attack like we have not seen since the days of Jim Crow.

These targeted, intentional, cruel attacks on our voting rights require more than words. We demand an enlightened, moral Presidential response from you to save our nation from the danger and darkness of an unsteady democracy. It is our prophetic duty to sound the alarm at this time for we foresee our people teetering on the brink of exclusion from the promised land of equal rights for all under the law.

We know you see these attacks across the country, and particularly in Florida, Georgia, and Texas where our legislators are stacking the laws to make it harder than ever for Black and Brown voters. This year, legislators introduced anti-voting bills in 49 states. This coordinated campaign to prevent communities of color from being heard is no coincidence. It is in direct response to the 2020 election, which drew the highest voter of color turnout in the last century, breaking records even through the Covid-19 pandemic. So now we call on you with all of the fervent, moral authority we can muster to urge you to use the considerable power and resources of your presidency, which voters of color made possible, to rescue our nation from the perilous pits of a broken democracy.

That's why many of us came to the White House on Wednesday, November 17. We traveled from Georgia and Florida to join over 200 people from across the country who risked arrest calling for the passage of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Freedom to Vote Act, two pieces of legislation that would eradicate discrimination and set national standards for voting, increasing access to the ballot.

We would not have come except we knew that the Lord was on our side. We would not have come, except we knew that our nation was in danger of going back to the bad days of blocking voters of color, including the members of our congregations and organizations, from the ballot box. We would not have come, except we knew that the Constitution of the United States was on our side. We would not have come, except we knew that leaders from our home states have been slain, beaten, bloodied, bruised, and imprisoned to secure the precious right to vote. We would not have come, except we knew that a retreat on voting rights is not an option. We would not have come, except we knew that it is too dangerous to live in a nation that does not guarantee a

just democracy as its foundation. Finally, we would not have come, except we have a duty to God and people to uproot the weeds of injustice and plant fertile seeds of equality that can bloom into an inclusive democracy.

We did not come to the seat of power just to be arrested and return home. Our arrests are a message to you, calling on you to use the full power of the presidency to ensure that every voter has access to free and fair elections. Without a vote, we do not have a voice.

Voting is a way that we create change and make progress, both locally and nationally. There are no equal rights without the fundamental right to vote. Anything short of federal legislation to protect this right would undermine the work of the people in our communities who cast their ballots for new leadership last year.

The White House must use every tool possible to help protect the freedom to vote, including ending the filibuster. For far too long, the filibuster has been used as a loophole that has allowed a minority to silence our voices and deny our freedoms. It has no place in a just society.

Mr. President, it is time to act. We will keep coming back until we see you take real action to protect voting rights. We won't turn back or let others turn their backs on us. We won't get tired. We won't give up, give out, or give in to attacks on our voting rights. We will keep raising our voices, getting in "good trouble" and demanding action until "justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."

Sincerely,

We the ministers and friends of Metropolitan Atlanta Baptist Ministers Union; Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church in Waycross, Georgia; and Faith in Florida.

*Metropolitan Atlanta Baptist Ministers Union is a 100+ year old support organization that networks 80+ clergy of Baptist churches predominantly in the greater Atlanta area.*