

# NAACP NEWS

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Bruce S. Gordon  
President and CEO



Julian Bond  
Chairman, Board of Directors

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**August 27 2005**

## **NAACP PREPARES TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST GEORGIA VOTING LAW** *Justice Department approval of photo ID law called a step backward*

Bruce S. Gordon, President & CEO, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), said today that the Justice Department approval of the controversial Georgia law requiring voters to show photo identification at the polls is "a disappointing decision by an agency that is supposed to protect voters" by enforcing the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

"By approving Georgia's onerous law requiring voters to present photo identification to vote, the Justice Department weakened one of this nation's most important voting laws," said Gordon. "If left unchallenged, many African Americans and other minorities in Georgia will find it difficult to cast their ballots. I will call on a coalition of civil rights groups to join us in challenging the Georgia law."

Julian Bond, Chairman, NAACP National Board of Directors, said: "The 1965 Voting Rights Act required pre-clearance of Georgia's racially motivated voter restrictions, and the Justice Department sadly and wrongly refused to disapprove Georgia's limits on the franchise. Thankfully, the Act allows court challenges and these will surely follow."

About 8,000 members of the NAACP, led by Gordon, joined a coalition of civil rights groups earlier this month in a demonstration in Atlanta to call for the reauthorization of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and for the Justice Department to not approve Georgia's voter ID law. Unlike other states that request photo ID, Georgia's new law will not allow voters to use other forms of identification. In Georgia's 159 counties, there are only 56 places to obtain the required photo ID. There is no motor vehicle department office in the city of Atlanta.

The Voting Rights Act is credited with increasing minority participation in the political process and empowering minority communities to elect thousands of African American candidates to local, state and federal office. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Act into law in 1965. It is designed to prevent barriers to voting such as: intimidation, voter harassment, the poll tax, voting instructions printed only in English, literacy tests, racial gerrymandering and other tools of disenfranchisement. The Act further guarantees that no federal, state or local government shall in any way impede or discourage people from registering to vote or voting because of their race or color. Portions of the Act are due to expire in 2007.

The NAACP is the United States' oldest and largest civil rights organization, dedicated for 96 years to achieving equality for African-Americans and fighting racial discrimination against anyone. Its half-million members in 2200 local units scattered throughout the 50 states, Europe and the Pacific are the front-line grassroots troops for racial justice in their communities.

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