



BWLA STATEMENT

BWLA Statement on the United States Supreme Court's Decision in *Louisiana v. Callais*

The United States Supreme Court's April 29, 2026 decision in *Louisiana v. Callais* significantly undermines and weakens Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, threatening one of the nation's most important protections against racially discriminatory voting practices.

Although this case arose from Louisiana's congressional map, its consequences reach far beyond the South. Here in Chicago and across the Chicagoland region, Black communities know that political representation is not abstract. This representation is crucial, as it fundamentally dictates access to vital resources, including quality schools, stable housing, public safety, healthcare, economic opportunity, and justice.

For generations, the Voting Rights Act has served as a critical safeguard for Black voters and other communities of color seeking equal access to political power. This ruling makes it harder for communities to challenge maps that dilute their voices, even where the practical effect is to diminish the electoral power of historically excluded voters.

As Black women lawyers in Chicagoland, we understand that democracy is not self-executing. It must be defended in courtrooms, legislatures, communities, and at the ballot box. We reject any interpretation of the Constitution that treats remedies for racial exclusion as though they are the harm.

Immediate Calls to Action

- Congress must restore and strengthen the Voting Rights Act by passing federal legislation that responds to the Supreme Court's continued narrowing of voting rights protections.
- Illinois leaders should remain vigilant in protecting fair maps, ballot access, language access, voter registration, and election administration across Chicago, Cook County, and the broader Chicagoland region, and explore state-level legislative remedies to preempt further federal erosion of voting rights.
- Lawyers must use their training in service of democracy by monitoring redistricting efforts, supporting voting rights litigation, educating voters, and challenging laws or maps that dilute political power.
- Legal organizations and bar associations must mobilize their expertise, specifically through voter protection programs, know-your-rights trainings, public education, submission of timely amicus briefs, and partnerships with community-based organizations.
- Community members should stay engaged by checking their voter registration, participating in local elections, attending public hearings on redistricting and election

policy, and supporting organizations that defend voting rights.

BWLA urges members of the legal profession and the broader Chicagoland community to meet this moment with action. We demand that Congress restore and strengthen the Voting Rights Act; that state and local leaders protect fair maps, ballot access, and election administration; that lawyers and bar associations dedicate their expertise to litigation, voter protection, and public education; and that every community member remains engaged, ensuring that historically excluded communities are heard, counted, and represented.



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