



MAIL HANDLER UPDATE

NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS: 815 16th Street, N.W. • Suite 5100 • Washington, D.C. 20006 • (202) 833-9095



Paul V. Hogrogian
National President

VOTING RIGHTS ARE FUNDAMENTAL



Kevin P. Tabarus
Secretary-Treasurer

This summer was the anniversary of the Voting Rights Act that expanded access to the polls for black voters who were previously disenfranchised. The strength of a democracy is based on voter participation, ensuring all eligible citizens have access to voter registration and face no barriers. This ensures that voters are choosing elected officials that accurately represent their interests at all levels of government. The Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965 addressed post-Reconstruction Era state laws that prohibited many citizens from voting. The law banned literacy tests required to register to vote. It also required states and jurisdictions with a history of discriminatory practices to obtain approval from the federal government before making changes to local election laws or voting maps. Because of the law, between 1964 and 1968, Black voter participation in presidential elections increased by 67 percent. Increases in Black voter participation then led to an increase in Black elected officials. What followed was an increase in state funding sent to historically underserved communities, including increased spending on education, first responder services, and general infrastructure projects. Most

communities that were previously subject to literacy tests saw an increase of local spending by almost double over twenty years from when the VRA was enacted.

In 2013, however, a Supreme Court decision overturned the VRA provision requiring the states to seek approval for changing local voting laws. The result of that decision was predictable. We have seen repeated efforts to make voting more difficult, including limits to online voter registration and same-day registration; restricted access to early voting; stricter voter identification laws; closures of polling locations; and efforts to purge voter rolls. To restore access to the voting process, members of Congress introduced the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. Full access to the voting process is the only way to maintain a healthy representative, democracy.

President Trump has taken further steps to interfere with the voting process. In March of this year, he issued an Executive Order that called for a proposed rule change to the US Code requiring states' election boards to submit to the United States Postal Service a list of voters who are eligible for mail-in or absentee ballots. Postal employees would

then be required to pull any ballots that are not on the state submitted lists.

Mail Handlers are in the business of processing the mail, not taking it out of the system. During the 2024 federal elections, over 99 million ballots were processed by the Postal Service. 99.8 percent of ballots were delivered to election officials within a week, and 97.73 percent were delivered within three days. Despite these proposed changes, the NPMHU, along with the other postal unions and management groups, is once again taking part in local election task forces across the nation to ensure the timely processing of ballot mail. Requests have already gone out to Locals to identify ballot monitors in select facilities to identify any issues that might come up in connection with processing election mail. The NPMHU has been reassured by the Postal Service that these task forces will operate as they have in past elections. At the time of publication of this update, training for these task forces should have already begun.

If NPMHU members have any questions about the upcoming election, either as a Mail Handler or as a voter, please feel free to contact the National Office.



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