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Contract: Patrick Guarasci, (414)220-9577

**U.S. SUPREME COURT LETS ARIZONA ANTI-VOTER MEASURES STAND,
THROWING REMAINING PROTECTIONS OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT INTO
DOUBT**

MADISON, WI. JULY 2, 2021 – Today the nation’s highest court blessed discriminatory, anti-voter law and policy in Arizona, reversing a federal court of appeals and effectively disenfranchising many voters, including minority communities. The decision dilutes the protections of Section 2 of the [Voting Rights Act of 1965](#) (VRA), green-lighting discriminatory voting laws.

Jeff Mandell, Law Forward Founder and President, reacted:

“This is yet another blow to the Voting Rights Act, one of the great legislative pillars of American democracy. The impact of this decision will be felt not only in Arizona, where this case originated, but across the country and here in Wisconsin. Those of us who value democracy and an equal opportunity to make our voices heard must redouble our efforts to renew the Voting Rights Act through Congress, and expedite other legislation that removes barriers and roadblocks to voting. Our democracy depends on it.”

As Justice Kagan noted in her dissent, the VRA represents the best of America, but also reminds us of the worst of America, because it was, and remains, necessary to our democracy.

In 2013 the Court gutted Section 5 of the VRA in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which required jurisdictions with a history of discriminatory voting laws to receive “pre-clearance” before putting new voting measures in place. In the absence of this powerful tool, voters and advocates have increasingly relied on Section 2 to vindicate their right to vote. No jurisdiction in Wisconsin was covered by the pre-clearance formula prior to 2013, but its fall spurred an already-accelerating trend of legislation limiting access to the ballot around the country. Wisconsin is no exception: this year alone over 20 bills related to elections and voting have been introduced in the state legislature.

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act has served as a backstop, protecting voting rights in Wisconsin: the last cycle of redistricting legislation, which established one of worst partisan gerrymanders in the country, was challenged in part under this provision. Doug Poland, Law Forward’s Litigation Director, was one of the lead trial counsel in that case, *Baldus v. Government Accountability Board*, and successfully established that two Milwaukee-area Assembly districts violated Section 2.

This decision is a blow to voting rights in the State of Wisconsin, but Law Forward will continue to fight for a functioning democracy where all can make their voices heard.

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Law Forward is a non-profit law firm focused on protecting and advancing democracy in Wisconsin. We use impact litigation, the administrative process, and public education to protect Wisconsin's fundamental democratic principles, and revive Wisconsin's traditional commitment to clean and open government. Learn more about our work at LawForward.org.