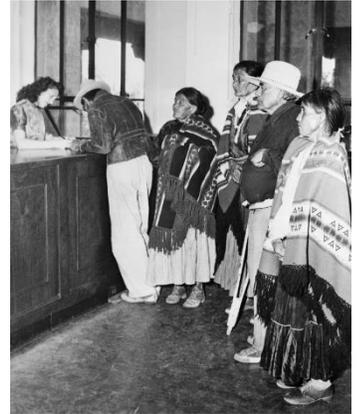


# Native American Voting Rights Act

A recent bipartisan roundtable hosted by the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration highlighted the necessity of federal legislation to secure the voting rights of American Indian/Alaska Native/Native American (“Native”) voters. While the Native vote continues to play a significant role in national, state and local elections, roundtable participants noted that Native Americans must overcome a variety of obstacles, including onerous voter identification requirements, inadequate language assistance, and remote polling and registration sites—all intended to suppress the Native vote, whether by mistake or design.



Therefore, *The Native Voting Rights Act* is intended to provide the necessary resources and oversight to ensure equal access to the electoral process. By embracing the principle that decisions made for Indians by Indians produce the best outcomes, this Act incorporates principles of self-determination into the electoral process. This means that Indian Tribes and their members will be the decision-makers when it comes to ensuring their communities and members have equal access to the ballot box.

***“In a democracy, suffrage is the most basic civil right, since its exercise is the chief means whereby other rights may be safeguarded. To deny the right to vote . . . is to do violence to the principles of freedom and equality.”***  
**Justice Udall, *Harrison v. Laveen*, 196 P.2d 456 (Ariz. 1948)**

## Key Provisions:

- **Establishing a first-of-its kind Native American Voting Rights Task Force.** This new program will provide funds to tribal and state consortiums for purposes of boosting Native voter registration, education and election participation in tribal communities.
- **Providing equal access to the voter registration and polling sites.** The Act includes provisions to increase Native American and Alaska Native access at each stage of the voting process, from voter registration to access to the physical places and mechanisms for voting.
- **Addressing the devastating effects of *Shelby County v. Holder* by restoring tribal “preclearance.”** This Act restores preclearance review for a specific subset of state actions that have been used to restrict access to the polls on Native lands.
- **Affording equal treatment for tribal IDs.** This Act directs voting precincts to treat tribal ID cards like state and local ID cards for purposes of voting.
- **Requiring adequate language assistance.** Directs the State to consult with the Tribe on the appropriate method for furnishing instructions, assistance, or other information related to registration and voting.
- **Furnishing federal election observers.** Provides tribal leaders a direct pathway to request Federal elections observers.
- **Requiring DOJ to conduct annual voting consultation with Indian Tribes.** Given the persistent, unrelenting threats to the right to vote for Native American and Alaska Native citizens, this section directs DOJ to consult annually with tribal organizations.