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MEDIA ADVISORY

January 25, 2022

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***** MEDIA ADVISORY Wednesday, January 26th at Noon *****
**Senator Taddeo, Representative Goff-Marcil and
Representative Thompson Join Voting Rights Activists to
Discuss Critical Voting Rights Bills**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. -- On Wednesday, January 26 at 12pm, **Senator Annette Taddeo (D-Miami), Representative Geraldine Thompson (D-Orlando)** and **Representative Joy Goff-Marcil (D-Maitland)** joined by voting rights advocates, will hold a press conference at the Florida Capitol to discuss critical voting rights bills ([SB1914/HB1353](#) and [SB1836/HB1373](#)) they have introduced to ensure that every eligible voter has their voice heard and their vote counted.

Who: Speakers include –

- **Senator Annette Taddeo**
- **Representative Geraldine Thompson**
- **Representative Joy Goff-Marcil**
- **Kara Gross** - Legislative Director at the ACLU of Florida
- **Brad Ashwell** - All Voting is Local

What: Press Conference on **SB 1914/HB 1353** and **SB 1836/HB 1373**

Where: The Florida State Capitol, 4th Floor in front of the Senate Chamber and via [Facebook Live Stream](#)

When: Wednesday, January 26 at 12pm

Senate Bill 1914 by Senator Taddeo and **House Bill 1353** by Representative Thompson would make voting more convenient and accessible to all eligible Floridians. These bills seek to implement a number of pro-voter policies, including simplifying the registration process so that eligible Floridians can register to vote whenever they update their driver license or otherwise interact with the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, making Election Day a state holiday so that people don't have to miss work to vote, allowing eligible Floridians to register to vote on any day, including up through Election Day, ensuring that vote by mail ballots postmarked by election day will be counted so long as they are received within 10 days, and providing paid-postage stamped envelopes for individuals voting by mail. "No matter what we look like or where we come from, Floridians agree: we need a transparent election process that we can trust," said **Senator Taddeo**. "Sadly, in response to record turnout in 2020 from Black and Brown communities, states have continued to pass anti-voter laws across the country, and last year Florida was no exception. This is unacceptable. The bills we have introduced, Senate Bill 1914 and HB 1353, will help to ensure that every eligible voter has their voice heard and their vote counted."

"In order for democracy to work, it has to work for us all. That means making elections accessible to all Floridians," said **Representative Thompson**. "These bills will allow Floridians standing in line to vote to receive food and water while they are waiting in the Florida sun preparing to vote. The bills will allow vote-by-mail ballots of people with disabilities and others to be returned by designees other than immediate family members who live at the same address. They address efforts to suppress the vote".

"Our right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy and the foundation for all of our freedoms," said **Kara Gross**, Legislative Director and Senior Policy Counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida. "At a time when states across the country are creating deliberate barriers to voting, Florida can and should lead by protecting our freedom to vote. These common-sense reforms will help make voting more convenient and accessible. By passing these bills, we will be moving toward making the promise of democracy real for all Floridians."

"With these bills, legislative leaders have an opportunity to make positive changes to elections in Florida that will help all voters. These bills address real issues and stand in stark contrast to fabricated partisan claims that have been driving policies that restrict voter access. We must guarantee that Floridians have a say in decisions that impact their lives: pandemic relief, public health and the well-being of our communities, health care, and more," said **Brad Ashwell, Florida State Director for All Voting is Local**. "We urge House and Senate committee chairs to agenda these bills as soon as possible."

Senate Bill 1836 by Senator Taddeo and **House Bill 1373** by Representative Goff-Marcil aims to remove a conflict in two Florida Statutes 196.03 (1)(b) and 106.011 (8) (a) that currently allows a political committee to claim a "starting balance" without having to report where that money came from.

Senator Taddeo issued the following statement: “For a state that prides itself on being a ‘Sunshine State’, I was appalled to read that the Elections Commission used a conflict in Florida law in a [recent ruling](#), which prompted me to draft this legislation. Political Action Committees should not simply be able to submit a report with a so called “beginning balance” without having to report the donors behind said balance”

"Floridians do not want dark money undermining their elections. Current loopholes in the reporting requirements for groups engaged in electioneering communications have allowed anonymous organizations the ability to heavily influence our elections with no ability for Floridians to see who is behind their message, or their money," said **Representative Goff-Marcil**. “HB 1373 increases accountability by tightening reporting deadlines, increasing civil penalties, and closing loopholes that allow untraceable money into our elections.”

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