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Florida Voters Lose Again in Tallahassee

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Today, the **Florida House** passed [SB 7050](#), yet another in a string of laws designed to make it harder to cast a ballot in Florida. No **House Democrat** voted for this bill.

SB 7050 adds new requirements for local Supervisors of Elections, adds excessive punitive penalties and restrictions on nonpartisan 3rd Party Voter Registration Organizations, and makes obtaining a Vote By Mail ballot harder despite it's long history as a successful option for millions of Floridians.

This bill passed the **Florida Senate** on Wednesday with unanimous opposition from the **Senate Democratic Caucus**. It now goes to **Governor DeSantis** for his signature.

Leader Fentrice Driskell (D- Tampa) issued the following statement, “Our democracy functions best when casting a secure ballot in a fair election is as easy as possible, but in Florida we are moving backwards. Bit by bit, every year, we make it harder for busy working people to cast ballots in their communities. In Florida, we don't even wait to see what last year's bill does before we propose the next set of changes. In Florida, the goal does not seem to be to make elections better.”

House Republicans rejected over two dozen amendments to make the bill better, including one by **Representative Angie Nixon (D- Jacksonville)** that would have expressly clarified that Florida's “resign to run” law would have applied to anyone seeking the office of President or Vice President of the United States of America.

Representative Nixon said, “I attempted to pass an amendment that would've forced the governor to resign to run for president. My amendment was about ensuring we protect our democracy and ensuring that we have a governor doing what Floridians need him to do. It was voted down by Republicans because they're consistently doing Ron DeSantis's bidding. This bill like other legislation illustrates

the end of Florida's checks and balances in what should be a separation of powers.

This amendment was needed because Floridians are concerned. They're concerned that our governor has already launched an unofficial campaign and if he is not forced to resign to run, he will continue to neglect his duties."

Other **House Democratic Caucus** members' reactions to the bill:

Tampa Bay Area:

Representative Dianne Hart (D- Tampa) added, "I was elected to serve the people of Florida, working to make life better for them. Not, to help anyone become President. This election bill not only disenfranchises entire communities but create un fair advantages for those in power to continue their political career."

Representative Michele Rayner-Goolsby (D- St. Petersburg) added, "We need to look at the impact of the bills we are passing. It was 1965, when Black people were able to vote without restriction. All members of the Florida House should want to make the path easier to vote, not discriminatory or restrictive. Third party voter registration organizations are the heart and soul of the community and a vital part of our democracy. They ensure not only people are registered and they educate people on the process. However, it is clear the majority party is threatened because they keep changing the rules. The Florida House must stop bending to the will of political ambitions. Voting should be free, fair, and easy."

Representative Susan Valdés (D- Tampa) added, "As elected officials we should not be making it harder for US citizens to register to vote. This bill targets our young voters, first-time voters, black and Hispanic voters, and organizations that work to get people registered to vote. At the end of the day, this bill will harm ALL voters. This bill's main goal, besides disenfranchising voters, has been to allow the DeSantis regime to remain in power if he loses his future presidential run. Floridians voted for Governor DeSantis to do his job as Governor, not to run for office and disregard his job duties. This bill is a slap in the face to the democracy we enjoy, as well as the check and balances set by our system of government."

"This bill will restrict Floridians from holding politicians accountable. From requiring campaign finance reporting less frequently to making it harder for people to register to vote, this bill is an anti-democratic mess," said **Representative Lindsay Cross (D- St. Petersburg)**.

Orlando Area:

Representative Anna V. Eskamani (D- Orlando) added, "This bill is un-American and anti-freedom. It's another partisan attack on voting designed to reduce voter registration efforts at a community-based level. It's also another giveaway to Governor Ron DeSantis by repealing Florida's resign to run provision. We should be expanding access to the polls, not making it more difficult."

"This elections bill is bad for democracy. This bill will burden the voters,

disenfranchising many people and making it difficult for them to vote. We live in a Democratic Republic. We should intentionally create pathways to voting, not placing obstacles in the way. It's unfortunate that the amendment that would not allow the Governor to resign to run for President or Vice-President was voted down. If you want to run for President of the United States or Vice-President, you should step down from your current elected position. You can't fulfill your elected duties while running for such an office and you should be allowed govern a state while running for the highest office in the land. There is a conflict there, and he should resign," said **Representative Rita Harris (D-Orlando)**.

Representative LaVon Bracy Davis (D- Orlando) said, "It is statistically true that 3rd party voter registration organizations register more black and brown voters. It is genuinely scary to see legislation like this surfacing that has negative implications on the voting access that we, as a community, fought so hard for. For a party that believes in limited government, I am disheartened to see how many doctor offices, classrooms, and now election booths that they insist on inserting restrictions into that benefit no one except for the legislative majority that put them there."

South Florida Area:

"This election bill is simply a part of "The Wishlist Session." Yes, "Wishlist" of one party, not the people of Florida. This bill is going too far. This bill further alienates people from an important process that many citizens are already discouraged to participate in. It limits transparency with campaign contributions by changing reporting from monthly to quarterly. It discourages voter participation and will lead to large segments of our population being underrepresented and unheard. Floridians, Florida is MINE, it's your, it's ours. Let's act like it and get engaged in this process," said **Representative Felicia Robinson (D- Miami)**.

"The changes to third-party voter registration organization laws will have a chilling effect on voter participation. We should be finding solutions, not creating barriers to voting if we wish to remain a true democracy," stated **Representative Katherine Waldron (D- Wellington)**.

"Placing barriers and undue burden on voters, third-party registration entities, supervisors of elections is wrong and inefficient. We need to ensure everyone eligible to vote can do so in the easiest and more effective manner to participate in the sacred democratic process of voting." In the words of Thomas Jefferson, "We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate," and we need to ensure that THE PEOPLE have a fair chance at participating in the democratic process," said **Representative Marie Paule Woodson (D- Hollywood)**.

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