



## **Court Blocks Proof-of-Citizenship Requirements for Voters in Three States**

---

**Washington D.C., September 15, 2016** — A federal appeals court has blocked Kansas, Alabama, and Georgia from adding proof-of-citizenship requirements to the federal mail voter registration form. Advancing Justice | AAJC and sixteen other civil rights and voting groups filed an amicus brief, explaining how the challenged requirements disenfranchise voters.

The League of Women Voters sued Brian D. Newby, the Executive Director of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, to prevent the proof-of-citizenship requirements from taking effect. The Advancing Justice | AAJC-led amicus brief points out that citizens in traditionally disadvantaged communities are more likely to lack the documents to satisfy proof-of-citizenship requirements and that for many individuals, the cost and burden involved in obtaining documents will be a significant obstacle and deterrent to exercising their constitutional right to vote.

Last Friday's ruling, which was handed down by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, protected voters in Kansas, Alabama, and Georgia. The court granted a preliminary injunction only one day after hearing oral argument in the case. In blocking the proof-of-citizenship requirements, the two-judge majority noted that an injunction was in the "public interest" and agreed that implementing the requirements would cause "irreparable harm."

"The court's decision removes unjustified obstacles to voter registration," said Cecelia Chang, director of litigation at Advancing Justice | AAJC. "Eligible citizens should not have to pay hundreds of dollars or expend many hours, days, and weeks securing documents so they can register to vote."

"This is a victory for voters in Georgia," said Stephanie Cho, Executive Director at Advancing Justice - Atlanta. "Proof-of-citizenship requirements disproportionately burden young voters and naturalized citizens and would have made it more difficult for Asian American voters, one of Georgia's fastest growing groups, to vote in upcoming elections."

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC has a mission to advance civil and human rights for Asian Americans. We strive to empower Asian Americans and Pacific Islander communities across the country by bringing local and national constituencies together, advocate for federal policy that reflects the needs of Asian Americans, and promotes a fair and equitable society for all.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta (formerly Asian American Legal Advocacy Center or AALAC) is the first nonprofit legal center dedicated to promoting the rights of Asian immigrants and refugees in the Southeast. We were formed in the Spring of 2010 by and for Asian Americans. We work in four major program areas: public policy; legal education and support; civic engagement; and defense of rights. You can read more about us at [www.advancingjustice-atlanta.org](http://www.advancingjustice-atlanta.org).

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 was enacted to help cure disparities in voter registration and to make it easier for all citizens to register to vote. A centerpiece of the NVRA was the establishment of a simplified National Mail Voter Registration Form. Until 2016, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, the agency that administers the federal form, had previously rejected prior requests by states citing that "documentation

requirements was unnecessary and contrary to NVRA’s goal of streamlining the voter registration process and encouraging voter registration drives.”

The organizations joining Advancing Justice | AAJC in the brief were Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Atlanta; Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Asian Law Caucus; Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Chicago; Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Los Angeles; The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee; Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund; Campaign Legal Center; Common Cause; Dēmos; Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund; National Asian Pacific American Bar Association; National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund; National Council of Jewish Women; People for the American Way Foundation; The Service Employees International Union; and The Southern Coalition for Social Justice in Support of Appellants.

### **About Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta**

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta (formerly Asian American Legal Advocacy Center or AALAC) is the first non-profit law center dedicated to Asian immigrants and refugees (“Asian Americans”) in the Southeast.

Our goal is to engage, educate and empower under-represented Asian Americans to greater civic participation.

We are one of five independent organizations that make up the national Asian Americans Advancing Justice. Together with our affiliates in Chicago, DC, Los Angeles and San Francisco, we bring more than 100 years of collective experience in addressing the civil rights issues faced by Asian Americans and other vulnerable and underserved communities. Visit [www.advancingjustice-atlanta.org](http://www.advancingjustice-atlanta.org).