



City of Pittsburgh

510 City-County Building
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Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Text File

Introduced: 3/26/2021

Bill No: 2021-1354, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, voter turnout rates in the United States must be improved to uphold the nation's democracy, and accessing and exercising the right to vote without obstruction is a constitutional right that is being violated by states across the nation through deliberate efforts to disenfranchise or otherwise impede electoral participation by countless Americans; and

WHEREAS, according to the Brennan Center for Justice, at least 51 million, or nearly one in four, eligible voters in the United States are not registered to vote; and

WHEREAS, as of February 19, 2021, more than 253 bills restricting voting access had been carried over, pre-filed, or introduced in 43 states, with 14 restrictive voting rights bills introduced in Pennsylvania in February 2021 alone; and

WHEREAS, without an effort to halt and reverse restrictions on voting rights, the democratic rights of all Pennsylvanians - and, by extension, the rights of those in Pittsburgh - will continue to be at risk; and

WHEREAS, the For the People Act, now under consideration by the United States Congress, would expand access to voting, commit Congress to restore the Voting Rights Act, enhance federal support for voting security, improve donor disclosure practices, and strengthen federal ethics oversight; and

WHEREAS, moreover, the For the People Act would eliminate hurdles that burden eligible or would-be voters during the registration process as part of its goal to expand and modernize the country's voter registration system, including through the establishment and implementation of automatic voter registration, same-day registration, online registration, and a 15-day minimum early vote period for no-excuse absentee voting across the nation, while also ensuring that all aforementioned services are accessible and inclusive of those with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, further reforms included in the For the People Act would be policies to combat the effects of the Supreme Court's 2018 *Husted v. A Philip Randolph Institute* decision, which led to massive purges of state voter rolls, and a restoration of the right to vote in federal elections to millions of Americans with felony convictions who were previously incarcerated; and

WHEREAS, the legislation would unwind state voter ID laws and policies, which are tactics commonly deployed to serve a prohibitive role in election processes that make it more difficult for communities of low-income people, racial and ethnic minorities, the elderly, and those with disabilities to participate in said processes; and

WHEREAS, the use of independent redistricting commissions that accurately reflect the demographic diversity

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of a given region and represent a bipartisan makeup by states would be mandated by the For the People Act, representing a landmark achievement in the fight against hyper-partisan gerrymandering that has been common across the country; and

WHEREAS, to protect the rights of Pittsburghers, the Council of the City of Pittsburgh must call on the United States Senate and United States Senators Robert Casey and Patrick Toomey to pass S.R. 1, the Senate counterpart to H.R. 1, the For the People Act, which has already been passed by the House of Representatives with support from Southwestern Pennsylvania Congressional representatives such as Rep. Mike Doyle and Rep. Conor Lamb; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh urges Congress - especially federal elected officials representing the City of Pittsburgh - to support H.R. and S.R. 1, the For the People Act, to protect American democracy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Will of Council shall be shared with the Offices of United States Senators Robert Casey and Patrick Toomey to communicate the will of this legislative body as the Senate considers and debates S.R. 1.