

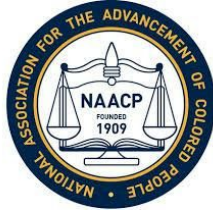
NAACP NEWS

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Francys Johnson, President
Georgia NAACP
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PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Constance Wallace
E: communications@naacpga.org
P: (404) 577-8977



PRESS RELEASE

GEORGIA NAACP AND COMMON CAUSE ASK FEDERAL COURT TO STOP VOTER PURGE

Federal Lawsuit filed today alleges Georgia Secretary of State broke the Law

ATLANTA – Georgia’s Secretary of State has illegally purged tens of thousands of voters from the state’s registration rolls and could remove hundreds of thousands more unless Georgia law is brought in line with requirements of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), the Georgia NAACP and Common Cause charge in a lawsuit filed today.

“This isn’t the first, second, third or even the fourth time that Kemp has put partisan politics over Georgians right to vote. Now Kemp is illegally kicking certain citizens off of voter rolls” said Francys Johnson, Georgia NAACP President and Statesboro Civil Right Attorney.

“Brian Kemp’s tenure as Georgia’s Secretary of State has been marked by other violations of the law and serious errors that created havoc for voters. Most of the issues flagged by the NAACP and other voting rights groups have been about the lack of transparency flawed processes; and failure to consult stakeholders” said Johnson.

Filed in U.S. District Court in Atlanta, the suit seeks an injunction to block Kemp from further purges based on a failure to vote and an order restoring to the rolls any voters who’ve been purged under the state’s current policy.

“When citizens register to vote, they fairly assume that unless they move, their registration will remain valid,” said Common Cause President Miles Rapoport. “But following Georgia law, Secretary of State Brian Kemp is removing people from the polls – without notice – if they miss a series of elections. The law and state policy puts hundreds of thousands of Georgians in jeopardy not having their voices heard in the upcoming election.”

100 Edgewood Avenue NE, Suite 1610, Atlanta, Georgia 30303

The suit highlights an apparent conflict between state and federal voting laws. The NVRA specifically prohibits states from purging individuals for having failed to vote. However, Georgia law places voters who've missed voting for the previous three years on an "inactive" list and then purges those who fail to verify their addresses and do not vote in the next two general elections.

Due to the state's practice, as of June 2015, over 800,000 Georgians have been placed on the inactive list and are in danger of being purged.

Once purged, the voter must re-register in order to regain his or her right to vote.

The suit alleges that in addition to violating the NVRA, the state's practice is unconstitutional. Because casting a vote is considered a form of speech, the purges also violate the free speech guaranteed in the First Amendment of the Constitution, Common Cause and the NAACP contend.

Atlanta attorney Emmet J. Bondurant and the firm of Bondurant, Mixson & Elmore are representing Common Cause and the NAACP in the suit. Bondurant has represented the NAACP in previous voting rights cases and is a member of both Common Cause's National Governing Board and Common Cause Georgia's board.

Founded in 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. The Georgia NAACP has had an unbroken presence in Georgia since 1917. The Georgia NAACP maintains a network of branches throughout Georgia, from cities to small rural counties. The Georgia NAACP has been the most effective and consistent advocates for civil and human rights in Georgia. The NAACP's half-million adult and youth members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.

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