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On the 100th day of President Barack Obama's administration, the Supreme Court heard arguments brought by conservative lawyers to try to derail the voting rights act.

Their strategy was to find a test case from a tiny, virtually all White municipal district in Texas, to have section 5 – often called the heart of the voting rights act- declared unconstitutional.

There is an irony that on the day marking the first 100 days of America's first Black president's term, the very act that assures an inclusive democracy is being assailed.

Millions of people – White, Black, Hispanic, Asian and Native American – rejoiced in the breakthrough election of President Obama. It was the shattering of the highest glass political ceiling and his victory, our victory, was in no small part because of the doors that were flung open to all Americans to participate in the electoral process.

Specifically, the Voting Rights Act's section 5 rules that districts and jurisdictions with a history of voting discrimination must submit all proposed changes to the Department of Justice or D.C. District Court for approval .

It prevents hundreds of acts of voter discrimination in every election cycle. As recent as last year, counties covered under section 5 were the scenes of voter intimidation. In Boynton, FL people went through African American neighborhoods stating that anyone who has outstanding warrants, owes child support or even has an outstanding traffic ticket would be arrested if they attempted to vote. Police officers were stationed outside of polling places.

In Collier, the Republican Party organized "do not forward" mailings which meant when they got returned mail, they could aggressively challenge people at the polls who may have moved.

Opponents say that we don't need the Voting Rights Act anymore because we have successfully elected an African American president. What they fail to examine is the lack of change in voting patterns amongst whites in the states covered by Section 5. President Obama received 47 percent of the white vote in non section 5 states. But in the states covered under the Act, he only received 26 percent.

The Act has successfully protected African American, Native American, Asian American, and Spanish speaking voters. In 2003, the clause protected Black residents of Ville Platte, LA against redistricting plans that would reduce the slightly-majority Black population in one district and relocate them to a predominantly-Black district – reducing the number of districts where Blacks held a voting majority. In another instance, Section 5 successfully prevented intimidation of Asian American voters in the 2004 election of Phuong Tan Huynh to the Bayou La Batre, AL City Council. The clause prevailed again when a federal court rejected South Dakota's plan to over-concentrate Native Americans in a single district.

On Wednesday, April 29, when the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments in this case, our democracy hung in the balance, hundreds of NAACP members and others gathered outside court tell it to uphold our nation's democracy. If the case succeeds, it will rob millions of people of their voice and their fundamental right to elect their own government.

In doing so, it will rob America herself of the ability to realize the defining pledge of "freedom and democracy for all".

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