

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 17, 2015

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

**Assembly Joint Resolution**

**No. 13**

**Introduced by Assembly Member Ridley-Thomas**

*(Coauthors: Assembly Members Achadjian, Alejo, Travis Allen, Atkins, Baker, Bigelow, Bloom, Bonilla, Bonta, Brough, Burke, Calderon, Campos, Chang, Chau, Chávez, Chiu, Chu, Cooley, Cooper, Dahle, Daly, Dodd, Eggman, Frazier, Gallagher, Cristina Garcia, Eduardo Garcia, Gatto, Gipson, Gomez, Gonzalez, Gordon, Grove, Hadley, Roger Hernández, Holden, Irwin, Jones, Jones-Sawyer, Lackey, Levine, Linder, Lopez, Low, Maienschein, Mayes, McCarty, Medina, Melendez, Mullin, Nazarian, Obernolte, O'Donnell, Olsen, Perea, Quirk, Rendon, Rodriguez, Salas, Santiago, Steinorth, Mark Stone, Thurmond, Ting, Wagner, Waldron, Weber, Wilk, Williams, and Wood)*

April 7, 2015

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 13—Relative to the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 13, as amended, Ridley-Thomas. The Voting Rights Act of 1965

This measure would recognize August 6, 2015, as the 50th anniversary of the signing of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965. This measure would also urge the Congress and President of the United states to continue to secure citizens' right to vote and remedy any racial discrimination in voting.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Signed into law on August 6, 1965, by President  
2 Lyndon B. Johnson, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is a landmark  
3 piece of federal legislation in the United States; and

4 WHEREAS, One hundred and forty-five years ago, in 1870,  
5 Congress ratified the 15th Amendment, which declared that the  
6 right to vote shall not be denied or abridged on the basis of race,  
7 color, or previous condition of servitude; and

8 WHEREAS, By 1910, violence and intimidation resulted in  
9 nearly all black citizens being disenfranchised and removed from  
10 the voter rolls in the former Confederate States, undermining the  
11 promise of equal protection under the law; and

12 WHEREAS, Native American, Latino, and Asian  
13 American/Pacific Islander communities experienced similar  
14 attempts to disenfranchise citizens in their communities throughout  
15 the United States; and

16 WHEREAS, Between 1870 and 1965, voters faced,  
17 “first-generation barriers,” such as poll taxes, literacy tests,  
18 vouchers of “good character,” disqualification for “crimes of moral  
19 turpitude”, and other tactics intended to keep African Americans  
20 from the polls on Election Day; and

21 WHEREAS, During the 1920s, African Americans in Selma,  
22 Alabama formed the Dallas County Voters League (DCVL).  
23 During the 1960s in partnership with organizers from the Student  
24 Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the DCVL held registration  
25 drives and classes to help African Americans in Dallas County  
26 pass the literacy tests required to register to vote. On March 7th,  
27 1965, the first march from Selma to Montgomery took place. The  
28 march, nicknamed “Bloody Sunday” for the horrific attack on  
29 unarmed marchers by armed police, was broadcast nationwide and  
30 led to a national outcry for the passage of the Voting Rights Act;  
31 and

32 WHEREAS, Often regarded as one of the most effective civil  
33 rights laws, the Voting Rights Act was passed with the intent to  
34 ban discriminatory voting policies at all levels of government; and

35 WHEREAS, The Voting Rights Act is credited for the  
36 enfranchisement of millions of minority voters as well as the  
37 diversification of the electorate and legislative bodies throughout  
38 all levels of government; and

39 WHEREAS, Before Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act was  
40 added in 1975, language minorities were disenfranchised from the

1 electoral process. Section 203 required certain jurisdictions to  
2 provide registration or voting notices, forms, instructions,  
3 assistance, or other materials and information regarding the  
4 electoral process in the language of the applicable minority group;  
5 and

6 WHEREAS, In June of 2013, the Supreme Court struck down  
7 key sections of the Voting Rights Act that were designed to prevent  
8 discriminatory voting policies that can disenfranchise minority  
9 voters; and

10 WHEREAS, Despite 50 years of progress, racial minorities  
11 continue to face voting barriers in jurisdictions with a history of  
12 discrimination; and

13 WHEREAS, To build a stronger and more cohesive state and  
14 nation, we must continue to help advance the cause of voter  
15 equality and equal access to the political process for all people in  
16 order to protect the rights of every American; and

17 WHEREAS, We must continue to educate the next generation  
18 about the importance of civic engagement in our communities;  
19 now, therefore, be it

20 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*  
21 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature recognizes August 6, 2015,  
22 as the 50th Anniversary of the signing of the Voting Rights Act  
23 of 1965, and recognizes the significant progress made by the  
24 Voting Rights Act to protect every citizen's right to vote; and be  
25 it further

26 *Resolved,* That the Legislature honors and remembers those who  
27 struggled and died for this freedom; and be it further

28 *Resolved,* That the Legislature urges the Congress and the  
29 President of the United States to continue to secure citizens' right  
30 to vote and remedy any racial discrimination in voting; and be it  
31 further

32 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies  
33 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United  
34 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the  
35 Majority Leader of the United States Senate, and to each Senator  
36 and Representative from California in the Congress of the United  
37 States.

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