

## **ENSURING FAIR BALLOT ACCESS**

**Whereas**, ADL has been a strong supporter of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, recognizing it as one of the most important and most effective pieces of civil rights legislation ever passed; and

**Whereas**, through support for the Voting Rights Act and its extensions over the past forty-six years, the League has helped eliminate discriminatory barriers to full civic participation for millions of Americans – and sparked significant advances for equal political participation at all levels of government; and

**Whereas**, in October 2009, the National Commission approved a Resolution affirming ADL opposition to photo identification requirements for access to the ballot box; and

**Whereas**, a recent study done by the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law reveals that, over the past year, a number of states have enacted new laws and policies which impose more stringent ballot access requirements; and

**Whereas**, these more stringent ballot access requirements include:

- seven states that have enacted new photo ID laws for voting;
- three states that now require proof of citizenship to register or vote;
- two states that have enacted new restrictions on voter registration mobilization efforts;
- one state that abolished Election Day registration;
- three states that have cut early voting periods in half;
- two states have made it more difficult for people with past felony convictions to have their voting rights restored.

**Whereas**, the Brennan Center study documents that these new more stringent voting requirements will disproportionately impact ballot access for minority, young, rural, college students, elderly, low-income, and disabled voters, which they estimate may affect more than five million eligible voters; and

**Whereas**, while supporters of these new laws and polices assert that they are designed to address voter fraud, numerous academic studies and legal challenges to ballot access restrictions have documented that in-person voter fraud – including ineligible voters casting ballots or individuals attempting to vote twice – is very rare; and

**Whereas**, while a photo ID is warranted as a security precaution at borders and airports, any burden on ballot access or the constitutionally-protected right to vote must be justified by demonstrating that the benefits of the restriction outweigh the costs; and

**Whereas**, the United States has a long history of struggling to overcome voter disenfranchisement and voter suppression initiatives, including poll taxes and other devices to restrict ballot access; and

**Whereas**, ADL has a strong interest in supporting an appropriate balance between maintaining the integrity of the election process and protecting every citizen's right to vote;

**Therefore, be it Resolved** that ADL opposes efforts to restrict ballot access requirements absent substantiated, compelling evidence of voter fraud; and

**Be it Further Resolved** that ADL opposes ballot access requirements that can be shown to disproportionately impact any specific group of eligible voters, as well as intimidation and harassment of voters at the polls..