

August 12, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Senate Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
House Republican Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Republican Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Schumer, and Leaders McCarthy and McConnell:

***We, the undersigned civil rights organizations and Native American allies, endorse the Frank Harrison, Elizabeth Peratrovich, and Miguel Trujillo Native American Voting Rights Act of 2021 (NAVRA).***

This Congress should take up for consideration and pass the NAVRA, which was introduced in response to numerous voting rights concerns identified during [months of field hearings in Indian Country](#)\* and years of voting rights litigation involving Indian lands, and/or American Indian and Alaska Native voters. No bill goes further in making sure that Native voting rights are protected in upcoming election cycles.

NAVRA would authorize Congress to provide up to \$10 million each year from FY 2022 through FY 2037 to support the election goals and responsibilities for states, local governments and Indian tribes with respect to voters on Indian lands. This grant program would help encourage collaboration between Indian tribes, states, and counties to better meet the needs of voters on Indian lands that have been too often neglected. This would ultimately improve how elections are carried out on Indian lands – a benefit to both Native and non-Native voters on Indian lands.

\* Links to: <https://vote.narf.org/obstacles-at-every-turn/>

NAVRA also addresses the most egregious inequities faced by Native Americans when attempting to vote. Too often, tribal members are forced to go prohibitively far from their communities, often off reservation, just to vote. NAVRA would provide on-reservation polling and registration sites. It also streamlines how provisional ballots are handled for voters on Indian lands, and, where applicable, provides uniformity with how early voting occurs in Indian Country. The bill would also set standards for how voter identification requirements apply to members of Indian tribes. It also creates provisions for tribes to use tribal addresses to register and increases ballot drop boxes in communities where homes do not have addresses and often do not receive mail delivery. These provisions are extremely important. The federal trust responsibility requires that members of Indian tribes residing on Indian lands have as consistent and equitable access to the polls as their fellow United States citizens living off Indian lands. It is up to Congress to pass legislation in the face of [extensively documented evidence](#)\*\* that Native Americans currently are denied such access. NAVRA is such a bill.

Finally, this legislation is timely, with many jurisdictions beginning to plan for the 2022 election cycle soon, and with the increasing number of American Indian and Alaska Native voters.

Congress has declared that “the right of citizens of the United States to vote is a fundamental right”, and “it is the duty of the Federal, State, and local governments to promote the exercise of that right.” National Voter Registration Act of 1993, 52 U.S.C. 20501(a)(1) and (a)(2). NAVRA, if enacted, would do just that for Indian Country. For all of the aforementioned reasons, the undersigned organizations express support for NAVRA, and recommend it be included in any legislation passed by Congress that affects voting rights.

Please reach out to Jacqueline De León, [jdeleon@narf.org](mailto:jdeleon@narf.org), NARF Staff Attorney, to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC

Brennan Center for Justice

Campaign Legal Center

Demos

Fair Elections Center

Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

NAACP (LDF)

National Disability Rights Network

Southern Coalition for Social Justice