

DOJ Supports Priorities USA Position in Georgia Wet Signature Case

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Requiring that mail ballot applications be signed with a pen is a ploy to disqualify Georgia voters, says Alliance for Retired Americans spokesman.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On Thursday, April 18th, the Department of Justice filed a statement of interest asking the court to adopt the plaintiffs’ interpretation of the Materiality Provision of the Civil Rights Act.

Priorities USA, Vote.org, Georgia Alliance for Retired Americans, and Communication Workers of America Local 3204 Retired Members Council (CWA) filed a complaint in 2022 challenging Georgia’s requirement that voters sign absentee ballot applications in pen and ink only (“wet signature requirement”) -- an antiquated rule that prevents voters from completing their applications digitally.

The Materiality Provision prohibits denying the right to vote because of paperwork errors in any “application, registration, or other act requisite to voting, if such error or omission is not material in determining” qualifications to vote. Plaintiffs argued that the instrument used to enter a signature on an absentee ballot application is irrelevant to voter qualifications, and that electronic signatures are widely accepted in Georgia for other official business.

By supporting enforcement of the Materiality Provision, the DOJ is taking meaningful action to ensure Georgia voters are able to apply for and cast an absentee ballot without undue administrative barriers.

“The wet signature law is a blatant attempt at disenfranchising voters who cast absentee ballots in Georgia,” **said Priorities USA Executive Director Danielle Butterfield**. “The Department of Justice supporting our interpretation in this case is an important step towards the correct

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application of the Civil Rights Act. The backing of the DOJ underscores the strength of our legal challenge, and we remain committed to protecting the right to vote both in the courtroom and in states across the nation."



"Requiring that mail ballot applications be signed with a pen is a ploy to disqualify Georgia voters," **said Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans.** "Our Georgia members take the right to vote seriously and often vote absentee. The Department of Justice is on our side because this peculiar rule will certainly result in many Georgia seniors being unable to vote at all. Elected officials should make it easier for people to cast a ballot, not create unconstitutional schemes that suppress the vote."

"Vote.org is proud to be on the frontlines fighting for every Georgian's right to access the ballot box." **said Andrea Hailey, CEO of Vote.org.** "Georgia's wet signature requirement disproportionately hurts young people, communities of color, and vulnerable populations trying to request absentee ballots -- but make no mistake, these sinister voter suppression laws are a threat to our democracy itself. Too many have sacrificed too much in the fight for voting rights for us to watch access to the ballot box be rolled back by those who want fewer and fewer people to be able to vote. The Department of Justice's support reinforces the merits behind our lawsuit and we look forward to continuing this fight in the courts and on the ground."

"Working families around the country rely on these protections to ensure that they have the access and opportunity to have their voices heard, and CWA proudly stands at the forefront of every Georgian's right to access at the ballot box," **said CWA Local 3204 Retired Members Council President Rita Scott.** "The Department of Justice's support of our stance in this matter validates the strength of our legal challenge, and we are committed to persisting in this fight both within the courts and in grassroots efforts."