Washington Voting Justice Coalition | WaVotingJustice.org

HB 1710
PRECLEARANCE

PROBLEM:

Civil rights activists fought for our federal and state Voting Rights Acts, which ensure that voters of every race and background have an equal voice in our democracy. However, the 2013 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* removed "preclearance," the crown jewel of the Voting Rights Act.

Currently, communities can only challenge practices that disempower voters of color through costly, multi-year lawsuits.

BILL SUMMARY:

Preclearance will ensure that many election changes receive an impartial review before going into effect.

Changes include adding or changing at-large seats, redistricting map boundaries, changing language interpretation services for voters, and changing voting center or ballot box availability.

The bill affects cities, counties, and towns with a previous voting rights discrimination violation.

The preclearance review must show that the intended change does not have the purpose or the effect of denying or limiting the freedom to vote on account of race or language minority group. This review ensures that any changes to improve our elections do not set back any minority group's hard-won freedoms to vote.

PRECLEARANCE WILL:

1. Continue the work of the Civil Rights movement to ensure equal voting access for voters of color.
2. Prevent voter suppression before it happens.
3. Save the time, cost, and long-lasting harm caused by lengthy Voting Rights Act lawsuits.

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