

Explore

Watch
(<http://www.msnbc.com/watch>)

Join In
(<http://www.msnbc.com/join-in>)

Speak Out
(<http://www.msnbc.com/speak-out>)



A woman casts her vote at a polling station on Nov. 6, 2012 in Sugar Creek, Wisconsin. **DARREN HAUCK/GETTY IMAGES**

The war on voting is a war on women

10/19/13 12:30 PM

By **Barbara Arnwine and Eleanor Smeal**

8 save share group 36 ([http://](#))

The assault on voting rights is a naked attempt to suppress the votes of minorities, students, the elderly, and the poor. But don't be fooled. This War on Voting is an essential part of the War on Women.

Nowhere is that clearer than in the recent wave of efforts to disenfranchise voters through strict voter identification laws, limits on early voting, and elimination of same-day voter registration across the country. And since the Supreme Court's vicious undercutting of the Voting Rights Act last June in *Shelby County v. Holder*, we are facing even more of an onslaught.

In states like North Carolina, which has enacted a strict photo identification law, one cannot cast a ballot without presenting particular forms of government-issued photo ID. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, 25% of eligible African-American voters and 16% of Hispanics do not have such an ID. In addition, 18% of people over the age of 65 do not have a current ID, and although most students have an ID card issued by their college or university, many do not have government issued-ID that would allow them to vote in these states, Politico reports

What is not commonly known, however, is that women are among those most affected by voter ID laws. In one survey, 66% of women voters had an ID that reflected their current name, according to the Brennan Center. The other 34% of women would have to present both a birth certificate and proof of marriage, divorce, or name change in order to vote, a task that is particularly onerous for elderly women and costly for poor women who may have to pay to access these records.

Early voting restrictions also inhibit voting by targeted groups. A report by The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and The Advancement Project showed the loss of early voting days in Florida had a significant impact on the African-American and Latina vote, and led to excessively long lines at poll sites, predominately in communities of color. Restrictions on early voting also hamper the ability of the poor, students, and the elderly to vote.

Women make up the majority of student voters, elderly voters, and minority voters, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Women have led voter turnout among eligible voters in every race that the Census Bureau has recorded since 1996 by three to four points. Nationwide, close to 60% of college students are women, and they voted at higher rates than college men in both the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections. Women



Speak Out

36 comments

join the discussion >

Add your comment in **General Discussion**

What do you think?

post

Latest comments

(http://fb-marygrady3.newsvine.com/_action/user/extendedSection?affiliate=msnbc.com)
Mary Grady
16 HOURS AGO

This is NOT voter discrimination. This is simply following the law. When a woman gets married, she has 3 choices - keep her birth name, take her husband's last name or hyphenate the two. However, if she chooses to second or third, the law requires (in every state as well as policy for...

0 | reply |

RightCommonSense

over 65 vote in larger numbers than men in that cohort, and voter turnout is also higher among African-American women and Latinas, who have seen significant increases in voter participation since 2004. In fact, in 2012, black women had the highest turnout of all voting groups at 66%.

Their votes make a difference. In 2008 and 2012, women cast the deciding votes for Barack Obama, and women determined 22 of 23 Senate races in 2012, helping Democrats retain control of that body.

Women voters are clearly a force to be reckoned with as are minority voters. African-Americans voted at a higher rate than whites, Hispanics, or Asians in 2012 and were the only group to increase voter turnout between the 2008 and 2012 elections. African-Americans, Asians, and Latinos all make up a larger share of the voting public now than in years past.

We have made great strides, thanks to the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which has reaped enormous benefits for women of all races, opening the doors of opportunity, expanding the electorate, diversifying our elected officials and bringing new voices of support and change into our politics.

Given the potential impact of minority voters in the next election, and the persistence of a gender gap in voting that tends to favor progressive candidates, Republican-controlled state legislatures have resorted to using voting laws to dilute the voices of women and people of color. And the Supreme Court's evisceration of the Voting Rights Act's preclearance requirement has emboldened more states to trample our rights.

Just this year, at least 30 states have considered or passed voter suppression laws including more restrictive voter ID requirements, limits on early voting, and reduction of accessible polling sites. It's no coincidence that many of these states are also home to some of the country's most draconian legislation undermining women's reproductive and self-determination rights, including North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

But women and people of color will not be denied once again. We must remember that "civil rights" and "women's rights" are not separate and distinct, but actually overlap, intersect and intertwine. Women formed much of the backbone of the civil rights movement that helped to inspire and advance the women's movement. As we remember our shared histories, we must turn these recent suppressive acts into effective, joint organizing tools for the women's rights and civil rights movements.

There is much work to do: voting restrictions must be challenged in courts, in state houses and in Congress. Citizens can call on Congress to act immediately to restore the voting rights protections that Shelby gutted. Other steps to take include a push for state election reform and clear information about changes to voting rules in local districts.

When it comes to voting rights, we must all stand together to ensure that we don't lose the basic rights of citizenship for which so many have marched, fought and died to gain.

Eleanor Smeal is President of the Feminist Majority. Barbara Arrwine is President and Executive Director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

Explore:

8 save share group 36 (http://)

Best of msnbc



Maddow exposes GOP's ex-fugitive 'expert'
(http://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show/watch/maddow-exposes-gops-ex-fugitive-expert-55574083901)



First Read Flash: Need to know
(http://www.msnbc.com/the-daily-
/the-daily-rundown/first-read-flash-1)



The House GOP's unique approach to 'experts'
(http://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show/the-house-gops-unique-approach-experts)



'The blast doors are never to be left open'
(http://www.msnbc.com/rachel-



(http://rightcommonsense.newsvine.com/_action/user/affiliate=msnbc.com)
YESTERDAY

In reply to: drpaultyler Wow, well said!

1 reply



(http://nishachittal.newsvine.com/_action/user/extendedSection?affiliate=msnbc.com)
Nisha Chittal
YESTERDAY

This is such an important issue that deserves more media coverage. Creating extra barriers that make it harder for women to vote is unacceptable.

0 reply



Top msnbc Commenters



whysouldicareany
(http://whysouldicareany.newsvine.com/_action/user/extendedSection?affiliate=msnbc.com)
0 followers follow



Pretzelogic in Philly, PA
(http://pretzelogicinphillypa.newsvine.com/_action/user/extendedSection?affiliate=msnbc.com)
6 followers follow



JohnMesserly
(http://johnmesserly.newsvine.com/_action/user/extendedSection?affiliate=msnbc.com)
24 followers follow

Most Active Groups

[rundown/first-read-flash-1](#) save share 2 ([http://v](#)

[\(<http://www.msnbc.com/rachel>](http://www.msnbc.com/rachel)

[maddow-show/the-blast-doors-are-never-be-left-open](#) save share 7 ([http://v](#)



Open-Forum (<http://open-forum.groups.msnbc.com/>)

67 followers

[join](#)



Newsvine Technology (<http://vinetech.groups.msnbc.com/>)

96 followers

[join](#)



Phoenix Gulf Group (http://phoenixgulf.newsvine.com/_action/user/extendedSection?affiliate=msnbc.com)

9 followers

[join](#)

create new group (http://secure.msnbc.com/_tps/group/create)



[Help \(<http://www.msnbc.com/help>\)](#)

[Terms of Use \(<http://www.msnbc.com/terms-of-service>\)](#)

[Privacy Policy \(<http://www.msnbc.com/privacy-policy>\)](#)

[Independent Programming Report \(\[\\[msnbc Info Blog \\\(<http://info.msnbc.com/>\\\)\\]\\(#\\)\]\(http://corporate.comcast.com/news-information/nbcuniversal-</p></div><div data-bbox=\)](#)

[Careers \(<http://www.nbcnews.com/id/27365695/>\)](#)

[Advertise \(<http://www.nbcnews.com/id/31066137/media-kit/>\)](#)

[AdChoices](#)

[NBCNews.com \(<http://www.nbcnews.com/>\)](#)

[Today.com \(<http://www.today.com/>\)](#)

[CNBC.com \(<http://www.cnbc.com/>\)](#)

[NBCLatino.com \(<http://nbc latino.com/>\)](#)

[TheGrio.com \(<http://thegrio.com/>\)](#)

[Bing \(<http://www.bing.com/?FORM=MSNBNV>\)](#)

[MSN \(<http://www.msn.com/>\)](#)

[Hotmail \(<https://login.live.com/login.srf?wa=wsignin1.0&rpsnv=11&ct=1362589167&rver=6.1.6206.0&wp=MBI&wreply=http:%2F%2Fmail.live.com%2Fdefault.aspx&lc=1033&id=64855&mkt=en-us&cbcxt=mai&snsc=1>\)](#)

transaction/indepe
ndent-
programming)

Closed Captioning
(<http://www.msnbc.com/closed-captioning>)

©2013 NBC
UNIVERSAL