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LACCD BOARD OF TRUSTEES COMMEMORATES 50th ANNIVERSARY of VOTING RIGHTS and IMMIGRATION BILLS, URGES LEGISLATION TO RESTORE VOTER PROTECTIONS

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the passage of two landmark federal laws, the Voting Rights Act and the Immigration and Nationality Act, the Board of Trustees of the Los Angeles Community College District unanimously passed a resolution Wednesday recognizing the vital importance of both laws to the nation while urging Congress to enact the Voting Rights Advancement Act to restore and strengthen the protections afforded by the VRA.

“Protecting the rights of all Americans to vote should never be taken for granted,” said Scott Svonkin, president of the Board. “We are very fortunate in California to be in a state that is working to make voting more accessible. To insure the right of all Americans to vote, we should urge Congress to act to protect and expand voting rights for all who wish to cast a ballot. Our students must know that their voice can be heard by voting.”

The Voting Rights Act banned discriminatory voting policies at all levels of government. The Immigration and Nationality Act abolished national origin quotas that restricted immigration from outside Western Europe.

"The enactment of the Voting Rights Act has special meaning for me because it was enacted at a time when minority students like myself never dreamed of being elected officials," said Mike Eng, vice president of the board, "but the 1975 requirement of translation of election materials in immigrant communities directly led to the election of minority candidates for the first time in many Southern California cities where our LACCD students live today. Therefore, strengthening the Voting Rights Act is important to our District."

In advocating for the passage of the Voting Rights Advancement Act, the resolution cited the recent “upsurge in voting barriers such as strict identification requirements, cuts to early voting, restrictions on voter registration and barriers to voting by formerly incarcerated individuals.”

Pastor William D. Smart, president and chief executive officer of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Southern California told the Board in Wednesday’s public meeting, “There is an overall hostile environment around voters in this country today. The younger generation must have the right to vote. They will find that it will enhance their lives.”

Betty Hung of Asian Americans Advancing Justice told the Board, “We are at a pivotal moment. Voters are facing more discrimination than at any time in the last 50 years.”

The resolution was sponsored by Svonkin and fellow trustees Mike Fong and Sydney Kamlager. They were joined by trustees Eng, Andra Hoffman, Ernie Moreno and Nancy Pearlman in approving the resolution.

[ABOUT THE LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT](#)

The Los Angeles Community College District, the nation's largest community college district, serves one-quarter million students a year in more than 36 cities in Los Angeles County at its nine colleges. The District covers nearly 900 square miles and has educated and trained the region's diverse workforce since 1969.

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