

Voting Rights Barriers & Discrimination in Twenty-First Century California

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LAWYERS' COMMITTEE FOR
CIVIL RIGHTS
OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

Voting rights barriers and discrimination still persist in California today.

In the new report, **Voting Rights Barriers and Discrimination in Twenty-First Century California: 2000-2013**, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area (LCCR) found that California voters face five categories of voting rights barriers: (1) vote dilution, (2) the de jure and de facto disenfranchisement of currently and formerly-incarcerated Californians, (3) voter suppression, (4) language access barriers and (5) disability access barriers.

VOTE DILUTION: AT-LARGE ELECTIONS



140

jurisdictions sought to change from at-large to district-based elections due to fear of a potential violation of the California Voting Rights Act.

If a jurisdiction experiences racially polarized voting, at-large elections can dilute the vote of Latino and other historically marginalized communities, depriving them of their constitutional guarantee of one-person, one-vote. The California Voting Rights Act protects against vote dilution in at-large election systems.

DE JURE DISENFRANCHISEMENT

1-in-13



African-American men in the US have lost their right to vote due to felony disenfranchisement laws.

African-Americans and Latinos are overincarcerated in the US. The approximately 180,000 Californians in state prison or on parole for a felony conviction—a majority of whom are African-American or Latino—are barred by California law from voting.

DE FACTO DISENFRANCHISEMENT

350,000

Californians incarcerated in county jails or on probation are eligible to vote, but may not be able to do so.

Californians with criminal convictions face formidable informational and procedural barriers to voting. Many sheriff's offices, parole departments, and local elections officials provide incorrect information on voting rights, and it can be hard for incarcerated individuals to register to vote.

LANGUAGE ACCESS

43%

Californians speak a language other than English at home.

Although a large number of California jurisdictions are required by law to provide translated voting materials to their citizens, many fail to do so. In some instances, poll workers illegally prevent voters from bringing an assistant of their choice into the voting booth.

DISABILITY ACCESS

**3.5
MILLION**

Californians over the age of 18 have a disability.

California voters with disabilities face significant, and often unnecessary, hurdles to voting. Often, polling stations are not accessible to voters with limited mobility, and at times accessible voting machines do not function properly.

