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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 27, 2013

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The Honorable Eric Holder
U.S. Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
Robert F. Kennedy Building
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Holder:

I am concerned about restrictive legislation concerning voter photo identification and the reduction of early voting days pending in the Ohio legislature, and seek your assistance. After this summer's dismantling of a key provision of the Voting Rights Act by the US Supreme Court, it is even more important that we remain vigilant and promptly address attempts to limit access for eligible voters.

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act prohibits any voting qualification or practice applied by the state which results in the denial or abridgment of the right to vote based on race. Two proposed laws in Ohio will have the effect of abridging the rights of African American and minority voters and would violate Section 2. Proposed Ohio voter photo identification law, H.B. 269, would require photo identification in order to vote in all elections, while S. 238, approved by the Ohio Senate last week and headed to the Ohio House, would shorten early voting days by a week and eliminate one-stop voting in Ohio. I believe both of these proposals are designed to systemically restrict the access of eligible Ohioans' to the voting booth, particularly minorities, students and the elderly.

Recent estimates indicate there are over 900,000 eligible voters in Ohio without approved photo identification. As many as one in four eligible African Americans in Ohio do not have the requisite voter identification. If enacted, H.B. 269 would disenfranchise large portions of the African American electorate and limit their access to the ballot box. With no indication that voter fraud is a widespread problem in Ohio, this proposal is a thinly veiled attempt to reduce the number of people able to exercise their right to vote. Ohio Senate bill 238 would shorten early

voting days and eliminate same day registration opportunities. Same day registration and early voting have recently been used at a higher rate by African American and low-income voters. In a swing state with a history of legislators manipulating voting laws to limit access, these two recent legislative maneuvers are particularly troubling. Restrictive voter photo identification legislation and the elimination of early voting days have the potential to block hundreds of thousands of voters from exercising their right to vote. They are active attempts to suppress the voting rights of African Americans and other minorities.

I have enclosed copies of both pieces of legislation, and urge you to exercise your authority to examine these bills so that voting rights are not jeopardized.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marcia L. Fudge". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress