



# Council of Bishops

## The United Methodist Church



### **A Call for Equal Voting Rights**

January 21, 2022

The United States Senate on Wednesday night rejected legislation which would counter actions taken by several states legislatures that will make voting more difficult, particularly in minority communities.

In the Fall of 2020, the United Methodist Bishops of the United States took a strong and bold stand against voter suppression standing firm on the voting rights of all persons. Today, we the bishops of the United Methodist Church reaffirm that stance believing that the right of every citizen to vote in the United States is under attack, and with it, the foundation of American democracy and the sacred worth of all persons.

The right to vote is rooted in a commitment to the value of all persons, created in the image of God as individuals of sacred worth. This belief in the sacredness of humanity is a foundational principle of many religious traditions present in the American body politic.

The legacy of injustice told in civil rights museums across our country is one of suppression of the vote. And the legacy of white supremacy and privilege continues. At times this suppression has been overt, as when one was required to own property or be a white male to vote. At other times it is more nuanced, as in moving or eliminating polling places, or in sowing confusion over early voting or voting by mail. Such actions undermine the people's confidence that voting matters. And in some instances, where the people have affirmed the right to vote for convicted felons who have served their sentences, state legislatures and governors' offices have sought to overturn the will of the people in order to suppress the vote.

Efforts by our government or elected officials to suppress the freedom to cast ballots violate the high principles upon which our nation was founded. By contrast, these high principles are affirmed and realized when elected officials and government entities promote, defend, and guarantee the unfettered right of all citizens to choose our leaders in free and fair elections.

We are in a moment of national crisis as we navigate two viruses, COVID and Racism, and suffer the economic consequences of both. In these crises we are reminded that our religious faith and our nation's principles support elections that faithfully reflect the will of the American people. Our faith in God who created all people in the divine image, and our hope that our nation can live into the aspirations of our founding ideals, lead us to pledge ourselves to the fullest expansion of this right to vote.

To that end we call upon the people of the United Methodist Church to use their influence in their states, legislative districts, and local precincts to enable voter registration and to encourage elected officials to provide the resources necessary to support the fullest participation in elections.

In Christ's name,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cynthia Fierro Harvey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping flourish at the end.

Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey  
President – Council of Bishops  
The United Methodist Church