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**Plan to Defend
Voting Rights**

Executive Summary

Without voting rights, there is no democracy. Maryland should be proud of our work to restore and expand these rights. Yet, around the country, politicians are working to undermine rights that should be guaranteed to everyone. At a time when our democracy is subject to false claims of election fraud by a former President and state election fallacies are spearheaded by right-wing hardliners, we need elected officials who will act to defend the civil liberties of all of our citizens.

Voting rights are even more crucial because of the leaked Dobbs v. Mississippi opinion from the Supreme Court, which would overturn Roe v. Wade and give States the authority to deny reproductive rights to millions of Americans. These rights control the power to elect representatives who promise to protect reproductive justice in state assemblies. We need to be able to elect U.S. Senators that enforce a more thorough background check of Supreme Court nominees to ensure they will vote to protect our personal freedoms. Privacy rights, contraception rights, and LGBTQ rights all face a sudden loss of constitutional protection, should this historic piece of legislature be overturned.

That is why Marylanders need an Attorney General who has spent her entire career as an advocate for the people. This issue requires tenacious commitment to justice and skilled legal strategizing. As Attorney General, my plan for protecting voting rights includes the following:

- **Expanding Voting Access in Maryland**
- **Joining Other Attorneys General to Advocate in Federal Court**
- **Protecting Voting Rights to Defend Endangered Constitutional Freedoms**

Expanding Voting Access in Maryland

Maryland was one of the first states to establish early voting that gave people an additional seven days to vote. The goal was to increase voter turnout and give people more opportunities to make their voices heard. No one should ever be turned away because of race, a lack of documentation, lines that are too long, or access to polling places. In 2021, the Maryland General Assembly enacted a wide range of voting rights bills that helped establish Maryland as a national leader on voting rights. Early voting hours were expanded from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. for both primary and general elections. House Bill 1048 and Senate Bill 683 allowed voters to register to automatically receive absentee ballots for every election and established criteria to determine where ballot drop boxes should be located. House Bill 745 reformed the polling place calculation formula to add more voting locations to counties with more than 50,000 residents.

However, our work is not done. We need to continue to build on these accomplishments. The number one reform we can pursue is expanding early voting. We must expand early voting to, at least, two weeks before the election and include the weekend before election day. We should also pursue either the automatic mailing of ballots, as was done during the 2020 election or the automatic sending of absentee ballot forms.

As Attorney General, I will be a fierce advocate — in courtrooms and in the legislature — for basic voting protections. This means standing against voter ID laws, ensuring adequate voting locations in elections, and supporting the more equitable drawing of congressional district maps. This will help increase turnout, especially amongst young people and historically disenfranchised communities. Additionally, I will work with local officials to ensure that there is adequate protections and compliance measures at polling locations.

At the federal level, I will lobby Congress to pass critically needed national voting rights legislation, like the John R. Lewis Voting Right Advancement Act and the For The People Act. Voting rights is an issue of profound importance, but also an issue of common sense and democratic honesty. Voting should be as easy as possible for all citizens.

Joining Other Attorneys General to Advocate in Federal Court

We have seen an unconscionable wave of proposals, especially in critical swing states, that attempt to manipulate election outcomes. State Attorney Generals have been partnering with one another to bring cases against on voter restrictions. I will draw on my long record of courtroom advocacy to challenge laws that discriminate against voters in federal courts. I will order attorneys in the Attorney General's office to file amicus briefs at the Supreme Court level to persuade the Justices to protect voting rights and overturn *Shelby County v. Holder*, thus restoring the Voting Rights Act.

Protecting Voting Rights to Defend Endangered Constitutional Freedoms

Every time we cast our vote at the local level, we are entrusting these representatives to defend our rights at the federal level. In recent years, these votes have become even more important in order to guarantee our State will be protected against radical and close minded politicians who seek to limit our human rights and Constitutional freedoms. If the leaked majority opinion from Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito becomes law, there has never been a more important time for our State elected Senators and Congressmen to stand up for our beliefs. Without a constitutional protection of reproductive freedom, each state will govern its own abortion laws. If we want our human rights to be protected by the state legislature, we need to be able to vote for these representatives.

As a woman, I would never want anyone — and particularly not Justice Alito — to make those determinations for me. Reproductive rights are an issue of intimate privacy and denying these rights places an undue burden on the American people. I have spent my entire career advocating for Marylanders, including victims of abuse who rely on reproductive freedoms to help extricate themselves from situations with domestic violence. As Attorney General, protecting the personal freedoms of all Marylanders will be my top priority because it has been the top priority of my 30 years working in Maryland courtrooms.

Conclusion

To deny voting rights is to deny the American people their right to democracy. The Attorney General is the people's attorney. It is my job to protect and defend the wants and needs of voters within my State. Voting is a Constitutionally guaranteed privilege and I will fight to protect every single person's civil liberties and expand voting access in Maryland.