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UCLA LATINO POLICY AND POLITICS INITIATIVE ISSUES STATEMENT ON FAILURE OF THE U.S. SENATE TO PASS VOTING RIGHTS LEGISLATION

In response to the U.S. Senate's failure to pass the Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act, Sonja Diaz, founding director of the [UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative](#), issued the following statement:

"As the country has become more diverse, we have seen an all-out assault on voting rights gain momentum. In just the last year, 49 states introduced over 440 bills aimed at restricting access to the ballot box. These bills have not only focused on rolling back measures that expanded access to the ballot box during the pandemic, but on those that have expanded access in the nearly 60 years since the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed.

"Failing to pass common-sense voting rights legislation by those elected to represent the best interests of the American people is shameful and a gross dereliction of duty. While many senators tried to debate that their 'NO' vote was predicated on protecting the integrity of our democracy, the real impact of their dereliction of duties is to further erode our democracy ahead of a consequential election.

"Yesterday's vote is unconscionable, especially given all the lives that have been lost to the fight for the freedom to vote and the bipartisan origin of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its five subsequent reauthorizations during times of intense turmoil. It is also antithetical to the ideals our country was founded on. That is why 60 years ago there was no issue more important than voting rights and the same remains true today. The world's eyes are on America, and yesterday's vote prevents us from building an inclusive democracy that can be a model across the globe. It also puts America's prosperity at risk by locking the communities who represent the future of our country out of the political process. As a government that was founded to be by the people and for the people, we deserve better than a Senate that acts only to restrict power and influence rather than to expand it."

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About UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative

The UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative addresses the most critical domestic policy challenges facing Latinos and other communities of color through research, advocacy, mobilization, and leadership development to expand genuine opportunity for all Americans.