



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTER OF FLORIDA

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FLORIDA VICTORY: FEDERAL COURT REMOVES NEW RESTRICTIONS ON VOTER REGISTRATION GROUPS *League of Women Voters of Florida, Rock the Vote and Florida PIRG Hail Settlement as Victory for Florida Voters*

Tallahassee, FL - Civic groups and Florida voters scored a decisive victory today when a federal judge indicated he will permanently remove controversial restrictions on community-based voter registration drives.

Federal Judge Robert L. Hinkle [issued an order](#) stating the court will grant the groups' request to permanently remove the restrictions once he receives confirmation that a federal appeals court has dismissed the case.

The League of Women Voters of Florida, Rock the Vote and the Florida Public Interest Research Group Education Fund (PIRG) [filed a lawsuit](#) in December challenging the restrictions. Judge Hinkle temporarily [blocked enforcement](#) of the law in May, saying the restrictions violated the U.S. Constitution and federal law.

"Florida's anti-voter law created impassable roadblocks for our volunteers, who have been bringing fellow Floridians into our democratic process for over 72 years," explained **Deirdre Macnab, President of the League of Women Voters of Florida**. "Thanks to today's ruling, we can finally put these roadblocks behind us and concentrate on getting Floridians registered to vote. We are grateful the court recognized that the Constitution does not tolerate these types of barriers to civic participation and voter registration."

"This order is a decisive victory for Florida voters," said **Lee Rowland, counsel for the Brennan Center's Democracy Program and one of the attorneys who argued the case for the plaintiffs**. "The Florida legislature has tried repeatedly to stifle access to voter registration opportunities, and once again a federal court has stopped them in their tracks. We are thrilled that voter registration groups can now get back to what they do best - expanding our democracy."

"Rock the Vote is thrilled that the most restrictive parts of Florida's new law will be blocked. We're now focused on the future: helping tens of thousands of young Florida residents register to vote before the November election," stated **Heather Smith, President of Rock the Vote**. "Today's order means we will be out in Florida making sure that young people have a voice in their communities. It's a victory for them, and for our democracy."

"Florida PIRG is committed to signing up thousands of first time voters across the state each election cycle. Our representative democracy relies on an engaged citizenry, yet our representatives in Florida have repeatedly passed laws that get in the way of expanding voter participation," added **Leigh-Anne Cole, Field Director of Student PIRGs and spokesperson for the Florida Public Interest Research Group Education Fund**. "We are eager to move forward with our important civic engagement work, and we hail today's important victory."

"Our leaders should encourage more people to participate in the democratic process, not punish people for trying to do so," stated **Julie Ebenstein, Staff Attorney for the ACLU of Florida**. "We are pleased that this order ends a pointless and regressive barrier to the fundamental right to vote."

"We are pleased that our clients and civic groups all across the state of Florida can again register voters free from the intimidation and threat of punishment created by this unconstitutional law," said **Robert Atkins, a partner at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP, representing the plaintiffs**.

Today, the Court indicated that it will grant a joint motion filed by both the civic groups and the state of Florida permanently removing the restrictions. Both the civic groups and the state of Florida have agreed not to appeal the ruling. The parties separately signed a settlement that ends the case once the court granted this motion and awards the civic groups' their attorneys' costs.

The Department of Justice, in a separate lawsuit, has [opposed](#) Florida's laws restricting voter registration and early voting. The restrictions on voter registration groups still remain at issue in that case. Read more about that lawsuit [here](#).

The Florida law is just one in a wave of restrictive voting measures that passed in 2011. Together, these laws could make it harder for millions of eligible Americans to vote this November, according to the Brennan Center's report [Voting Law Changes in 2012](#). Today's ruling is part of the pushback against these suppressive laws.

The attorneys representing the civic groups are with the Brennan Center for Justice, the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Florida, and leading *pro bono* law firms Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP and Florida-based Coffey Burlington.

[Click here](#) for more background information on this lawsuit from the Brennan Center.

Visit the Florida League's voter information site, [Be Ready to Vote](#). Also see Rock the Vote's [online voter registration tool](#), and more on the [Florida PIRG Education Fund](#).

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The League of Women Voters of Florida, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. For more information, please visit the League's website at: www.TheFloridaVoter.org.