

As Introduced

**135th General Assembly
Regular Session
2023-2024**

S. R. No. 359

Senator Ingram

Cosponsors: Senators Sykes, DeMora, Craig

A R E S O L U T I O N

To urge the Congress of the United States to enact 1
the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. 2

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

WHEREAS, Before enactment of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, 3
African Americans in the South faced tremendous obstacles to 4
voting, including poll taxes, literacy tests, and other 5
bureaucratic restrictions. Many also risked harassment, 6
intimidation, economic reprisals, and physical violence when 7
attempting to register or vote. As a result, very few African 8
Americans were registered voters, and African Americans had very 9
little, if any, political power, either locally or nationally; 10
and 11

WHEREAS, These numerous injustices existed despite the 12
fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution of the 13
United States, which prohibit states from making and enforcing 14
laws that abridge the privileges of citizens of the United 15
States, and deny the right of citizens to vote on account of 16
race, color, or previous condition of servitude; and 17

WHEREAS, American civil rights activists worked diligently 18
despite intimidation, danger, and uncertainty, towards passage 19
of the Voting Rights Act, which was designed to enforce those 20

rights guaranteed by the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to 21
the United States Constitution; and 22

WHEREAS, Congressional renewals of the Voting Rights Act 23
have been signed by Democrat and Republican Presidents; and 24

WHEREAS, The United States Supreme Court has, in numerous 25
decisions, upheld the Voting Rights Act, but in 2013 in *Shelby* 26
County v. Holder, ruled a portion of the Act as 27
unconstitutional; and 28

WHEREAS, In delivering the five to four majority opinion in 29
Shelby County v. Holder, Chief Justice John Roberts expressly 30
invited Congress to update the Act's protections based on 31
current conditions of discrimination; and 32

WHEREAS, Most recently, in 2019, the United States House of 33
Representatives, of the 116th Congress, passed H.R. 4, to amend 34
and renew the Voting Rights Act; and 35

WHEREAS, Following the passing of Representative John R. 36
Lewis, who played a pivotal role in bringing about the Voting 37
Rights Act in 1965, and who spoke forcefully for its renewal 38
before his death, the United States House of Representatives 39
introduced H.R. 14, known as the John R. Lewis Voting Rights 40
Advancement Act; and 41

WHEREAS, Since the *Shelby County v. Holder* ruling, while 42
Congress has failed to update the Voting Rights Act, many states 43
have enacted laws making it more difficult to register to vote 44
or to cast a ballot; and 45

WHEREAS, Countless thousands have been assembling and 46
marching through the streets of this nation to shine a light on 47
the racism and inequity that is still present in the United 48
States; now therefore be it 49

RESOLVED, That we, the members of the Senate of the 135th 50
General Assembly of the State of Ohio, in adopting this 51

resolution, urge the Congress of the United States to enact the 52
John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, to amend and renew 53
the Voting Rights Act; and be it further 54

RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit duly 55
authenticated copies of this resolution to the Speaker and Clerk 56
of the United States House of Representatives, the President Pro 57
Tempore and Secretary of the United States Senate, each member 58
of the Ohio Congressional delegation, and the news media of 59
Ohio. 60