



February 17, 2021

*Sent via Email*

Dear Senate Ethics Committee Members,

My name is LaVita Tuff and I am the Policy Director at Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta. We lead and shape public policy that impacts AAPI and all immigrant populations in Georgia. We educate our communities through workshops, publications, and community issue forums. We are at the forefront of policy advocacy and champion the civil rights of AAPIs in the Southeast. More importantly, we work year-round to build power and lay the groundwork for historic AAPI turnout in Georgia. Georgia has the nation's fastest growing number of immigrants able to vote, with more than 300,000 AAPI voters.

AAPI voters continue to be among the fastest growing electorate in Georgia, there was a 143% increase in eligible AAPI Voters from 2000 to 2016. Data shows that the AAPI electorate is an increasingly critical voting block, capable of delivering margins of victory.

SB 67 threatens to disenfranchise thousands of Georgia voters. It threatens to disenfranchise the gains achieved by AAPI voters. It threatens growing electorates that are full of members from Black, Asian and Latinx communities. Voter ID laws, such as Georgia's existing photo ID law, depress voter turnout without serving any legitimate purpose. Voter ID laws make voting much more difficult, if not entirely infeasible, for many voters.

We **oppose** the portions of SB 67 that require voter ID for requesting an absentee ballot by mail because it imposes an unreasonable burden on Georgia voters, creates barriers to absentee voting, and decreases access to the ballot. Bills of this nature threaten the AAPI vote and eat away at voter confidence for foreign-born voters. This bill requires anyone without a Georgia drivers license or personal identification card to submit a photocopy of another form of ID to be able to apply for an absentee ballot. This threatens to disenfranchise Georgia voters. **Voter ID laws, such as Georgia's existing photo ID law, depress voter turnout without serving any legitimate purpose.**

Studies show that voter fraud, particularly voter impersonation—the only type of fraud that voter ID laws can address—is extremely rare.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, voter ID laws make voting much more difficult, if not entirely infeasible, for many voters. There are millions of eligible voters in the United States without government-issued photo ID.<sup>2</sup> Obtaining a government-issued ID costs money, requires access to reliable transportation to government offices, and often necessitates other documents, such as birth certificates or social security cards, that may also be difficult to obtain. Because of these barriers, people of color, poor people, elderly people, people with disabilities, and people living in rural areas all disproportionately lack access to IDs.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Brennan Center for Justice, *The Truth About Voter Fraud* (2007),

<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/truth-about-voter-fraud>.

<sup>2</sup> In 2006, over 21 million Americans did not have government-issued photo identification. Brennan Center for Justice, *Citizens without Proof: A Survey of Americans' Possession of Documentary Proof of Citizenship and Photo Identification* (2006),

[http://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/d/download\\_file\\_39242.pdf](http://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/d/download_file_39242.pdf).



ASIAN AMERICANS  
**ADVANCING  
JUSTICE**  
ATLANTA

SB 67 further exacerbates these barriers by necessitating reliable and convenient access to a printer or scanner for voters who want to vote by mail. Many voters, especially poor voters or voters in rural areas, are likely to lack this access.

Absentee voting has long been a crucial part of ensuring access to the ballot for elderly voters, voters with disabilities, and voters without reliable transportation—some of the same voters who are also more likely to struggle to obtain government-issued photo ID. And the 2020 elections, in which unprecedented numbers of Georgians voted by mail, prove that absentee voting is even more critical to ensuring that Georgians can safely access the ballot during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Other states expanded their voting by mail options in 2020 in response to the pandemic.

Importantly, the increase in absentee voting did not result in an increased incidence of voter fraud. Yet SB 67 would make absentee voting not only more burdensome but also less reliable. The number one reason that absentee ballots were rejected during the June 2020 primary in Georgia was because they did not arrive to county boards of election until after Election Day. Implementing a photo ID requirement during the absentee ballot application process unnecessarily further complicates the process and increases the risk that absentee ballots will not be timely voted. Given that SB 67 does not specify how promptly absentee voters must be notified of a deficiency, some voters would almost certainly receive notification too late and thus be completely disenfranchised.

We **support** the creation of a web portal for submission of absentee ballot applications that can be used by certain voters (those with a Georgia driver's license or personal identification card). We saw this kind of portal used in the most recent elections in Georgia, and it makes it easier for voters to submit their applications without the hassle of printing, completing, and mailing in a paper application. We would encourage the legislature and/or the Secretary of State to further expand access to such an online portal to voters without Georgia driver's licenses or personal identification cards, provide access to the portal in languages other than English, and consider more efficient and effective options for voters without internet access as well, such as mailing absentee ballot applications or ballots to all eligible voters.

**We rose to the occasion, and we demand democracy.** We turned out. Not only did we set records for AAPI voting in Georgia, we did it during a pandemic, **and we will continue to rise.**

Thank you for your consideration of these matters.

Best,

LaVita Tuff, Policy Director  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta  
5680 Oakbrook Parkway, Suite 148  
Norcross, GA 30093  
404-585-8446  
[ltuff@advancingjustice-atlanta.org](mailto:ltuff@advancingjustice-atlanta.org)