



MEMBER OF CONGRESS

BARBARA LEE
NINTH DISTRICT
CALIFORNIA

August 25, 2012

Greetings from Congresswoman Barbara Lee

Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Women's Intercultural Network, California Women's Agenda (WIN-CAWA) Voting Rights and Responsibilities: Call to Action weekend. As you are aware, it is a pivotal time to fight for full and facilitated voting rights for all. And, as we have seen through recent Republican-led attacks, Americans' ability to vote has not been grandfathered in through the victories of our forebearers, but is rather a right which requires us to remain constantly vigilant.

I'd like to first thank WIN and CAWA leadership, membership and supporters for over 18 years of service to women and girls in the Bay Area, in our great state of California and throughout the world. Although I regret that I cannot be with you this evening, I want to recognize you for your vital work to mobilize voter education and to support a global women's agenda that focuses on championing equal civic participation for all—especially people of color and rural, indigenous women who are too often left behind.

As a Member of Congress, I have consistently opposed policies designed to gut our historic civil rights legislation. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 passed just one year after I graduated from high school, and I vividly remember the days of Jim Crow and segregation, the poll tax, and the humiliation and degradation of African Americans. Moreover, it is important to remember that just last year we celebrated 100 years of women voting in California, starting with the historic and narrowly won California state referendum and the first California Civic League, Berkeley Forum in 1911. These rights reflect decades' worth of collective political achievement, and we will not stand idly by nor see this progress reversed. Voter suppression and intimidation continue in myriad forms. The right to vote is the heart and soul of our democracy, and we cannot and should not accept any flaws in our election process. So, this weekend is a true Call to Action: Voting rights should never be a partisan issue, but an American issue.

On behalf of the residents of California's 9th Congressional District, I would like to thank you for the invaluable service you provide to our community. I join WIN-CAWA in our shared goal to protect the rights of voters, promote true equality and create a more just and peaceful world.

Sincerely,

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

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