Memo to Corporate America:  
The Fierce Urgency Is Now

By Erecting Barriers, Georgia is Backtracking on the Hard-Won Right to Vote

The right to vote is a cherished birthright of all Americans. However, for much of this nation’s history the ability to exercise this most fundamental right guaranteed by the United States Constitution was denied to African Americans. The bloody struggles of the Civil Rights Movement that led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were not easy and Americans of all faiths, races, and nationalities marched, suffered imprisonment, and were even killed to ensure each of us has the right to vote.

From the late Vernon Jordan, John Lewis, and Fannie Lou Hamer to Freedom Riders and other overtly racist voter suppression tactics are a thing of the past, Georgia and other states are rushing to impose new and substantial burdens on standing in long lines. It also simultaneously expands the ability to purge large numbers of Black voters by forces that seek to take this country backwards.

Make no mistake, we have seen this playbook before by those who seek to deny their fellow Americans the opportunity to make their voices heard at the ballot box. While the use of police dogs, poll taxes, literacy tests and other overtly racist voter suppression tactics are a thing of the past, Georgia and other states are rushing to impose new and substantial burdens on standing in long lines. It also simultaneously expands the ability to purge large numbers of Black voters by forces that seek to take this country backwards.

As Black business leaders, we cannot sit silently in the face of this gathering threat to our nation’s democratic values. The stakes for our democracy are too high to remain on the sidelines. Corporate America must support our nation’s fundamental democratic principles and marshal its collective influence to ensure fairness and equity for all.

If we are to build “a more perfect union,” we must stand united against those who seek to employ unjust and undemocratic laws in order to divide us and thwart the will of the people.

Corporate America should publicly oppose any discriminatory legislation and all measures designed to limit Americans’ ability to vote.

When it comes to protecting the rights of all Americans to vote, there can be no middle ground. We call upon our colleagues in Corporate America to join us in taking a non-partisan stand for equality and democracy. Each of us stands ready to work with you on what can and must be done.

Signed by

Rodney C. Atkins  
Gerald Adolph  
Paget L. Alves  
Shelley Archambeau  
Carag Arnold  
Kenneth J. Bacon  
Thomas J. Baltimore, Jr.  
James Bell  
Ronald Blaylock  
Stacey Brown-Philpot  
Leslie A. Brun  
James I. Cash, Ph.D.  
Debra Martin Chase  
Kenneth I. Chenault  
Caretha Coleman  
Ken Coleman  
Tony Coles, M.D.  
Edith Cooper  
Don Cornelw  
Dr. Marian R. Croak  
Richelleau Dennis  
Arnold Donald  
Roger W. Ferguson, Jr.  

Kenneth C. Frazier  
Ann M. Fudge  
Bruce S. Gordon  
David J. Grin  
Earl “Butch” Graves, Jr.  
Myron Gray  
Leslie D. Hale  
Melody Hobson  
René F. Jones  
Ron Kirk  
Debra L. Lee  
William M. Lewis, Jr.  
Ed Lewis  
Tracy Mattland  
Henry McCee  
Raymond J. McGuire  
Scott Mills  
Stephen C. Mills  
Laurence C. Morse  
Lionel Nowell  
Abadebayo Ogunlesi  
Clarence Otis  
Melonie Parker  
Richard Parsons  
Charles Phillips  
Paula A. Price  
Desiree Glapan Rogers  
John W. Rogers, Jr.  
Rodney E. Stater  
Marva A. Smalls  
Robert F. Smith  
Bontica C. Stewart  
Gaby Sulzberger  
Frederick O. Terrell  
John Thompson  
Lloyd Bentsen  
Darren Walker  
Robin L. Washington  
Theodore W. Wells, Jr.  
Tony West  
Benamor Pratt Wiley  
Fletcher H. Wiley  
Ray Wilkins  
Barron Williams  
Christopher J. Williams  
Ronald A. Williams  
Christopher Young


Foundation.blackeconomicalliance.org
Email: info@blackeconomicalliance.org