

## ASALH Statement

### “Preserve Democratic Norms and End White Supremacist Terrorism”

As we remember and reflect on the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and his work to have America end institutionalized and socialized racism, ASALH asks that we also take note of Dr. King’s work to ensure voting rights for all and his promotion of economic solidarity amongst working class people. Toward that end, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) staunchly condemns the recent law enacted in the state of Georgia titled “Election Integrity Act of 2021” which severely hinders the very process of democracy.

Rather than supposedly advancing election integrity, this law is unabashedly intended to restrict the voter turnout in areas with large percentages of African Americans and other people of color who were instrumental in producing Democratic victories in the 2020 Presidential and Senatorial elections. This is a blatant effort to resurrect historical patterns of voter suppression while avoiding the explicit use of race to disqualify voters that was the modus operandi during the Jim Crow era. Instead, the law will accomplish the same objective by, for example, imposing strict identification requirements, reducing the ability to vote by mail, and empowering the state Board of Elections to remove local election officials. This latter provision is of special concern to election officials in predominantly Black urban voting districts. The bill was signed in secret behind closed doors under a painting of an idyllic plantation. The Bill’s heinous intent was underscored by the arrest of African American Georgia legislator, Park Cannon, who attempted to protest the signing. ASALH stands with the group of African American business executives, the CEOs of Delta and more than 100 other companies, and Major League Baseball. Collectively we actively oppose the demonstrably anti-democratic electioneering machinations in Georgia that are underway in more than forty other states.

It is important to recognize that this assault on the voting rights of African Americans is one manifestation of a broader white supremacist attack on people of color, including the violence against the Asian American community. These attacks serve as yet another example of how some have set out to reinforce racial stratification in America. We call for widespread vigilance and active resistance to this heightened wave of attacks on our communities and our neighbors. As we watch the trial of Mr. George Floyd filled with video tape from multiple camera angles and testimony from eyewitnesses and high-ranking police officials, we and our allies believe that America must do more to end the resurgence of attacks on our voting rights. A first step is to have Congress pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and stop the flow of the restrictive voting tide taking place in Georgia, Texas, Arizona and across the nation.

In keeping with Dr. King’s mission to end racial injustice and increase social and economic equality, ASALH National calls on its local chapters and friends to stem the tide of racist attacks by:

(1) Reaching out to local Asian American organizations in an effort to create joint programming that informs and engages our communities to combat racial aggression and oppression in all forms together. These organizations include:

- a. Movement Hub which addresses Anti-Asian Racism across the nation;
- b. Organization of Chinese Americans based in Washington, DC with branches across the nation dedicated to advancing the cause of Asian Pacific Americans;
- c. Georgia based legal advocacy group Asian Americans Advancing Justice;
- d. Immigrant and working-class group advocates California Chinese Progressive Association of San Francisco;
- e. The Asianamericanfederation.org of Florida which calls together all persons of the Pacific Rim

(2) Encouraging our membership and those concerned to contact their Congressperson or State Representative to voice concerns over the Georgia Voting Act S. B. 202 and the arrest of GA State Representative Park Cannon; and (3) Continue to support the work of ASALH by donating to our organization as we continue to educate, inform, and advocate for our community.

ISSUED BY ASALH's Public Commentary Committee