

GABRIELA SANTIAGO-ROMERO
COUNCIL MEMBER, DISTRICT 6

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Colleagues

THRU: Council Member Mary Sheffield, Council President

FROM: Council Member Gabriela Santiago-Romero 

DATE: May 9, 2024

RE: Resolution in Support of The Michigan Voting Rights Act

Councilmember Santiago-Romero submits the below resolution urging the Michigan State Legislature to pass the Michigan Voting Rights Act before the end of the 2024 legislative session.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions. Thank you.

Cc: Honorable Detroit City Council
Louise Jones, City Clerk's Office
Malik Washington, City Council Liaison

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING SENATE BILLS 401, 402, 403 AND 404, A
LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE KNOWN AS THE MICHIGAN VOTING RIGHTS ACT**

BY COUNCIL MEMBER GABRIELA SANTIAGO-ROMERO

- WHEREAS,** Free and fair access to voting and participation in our democracy is fundamental to creating an equitable system of governance; and
- WHEREAS,** Michigan voters and election officials have established Michigan as a leader in democracy in recent years, enshrining a right to vote in the Michigan constitution, establishing a minimum of nine (9) days of early voting, creating a permanent mail ballot voter list, providing prepaid postage for mailed absentee ballot applications and absentee ballots, and requiring a minimum of one drop box for every jurisdiction and at least one drop box per every 15,000 registered voters in larger municipalities; and
- WHEREAS,** The Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 has been attacked and eroded since its passage; and
- WHEREAS,** Dozens of laws restricting access to the ballot and imposing discriminatory voting practices that have a disparate impact on black and brown voters, voters who have limited English proficiency, and persons with disabilities have been implemented across several states since the 2013 *Shelby v. Holder* Supreme Court ruling striking down the critical preclearance provision of the Federal Voting Rights Act; and
- WHEREAS,** Several states including California, Virginia, Washington, Oregon, New York and Connecticut have enacted state Voting Rights Acts while Maryland, New Jersey and Michigan have introduced their own versions of a state voting rights act; and
- WHEREAS,** The Michigan Voting Rights Act will build on the tremendous progress of the last few years and protect Michigan voters from vote dilution and voter suppression, offer additional legal tools for voters to fight discrimination, expand language assistance for voters with limited English proficiency, create a data institute to store and publish election and demographic data to foster more transparent, evidence-based best practices for election administration; and
- WHEREAS,** Passing the Michigan Voting Rights Act will protect all voters - including voters of color who have been the targets of discriminatory voting laws - from future discrimination and further establish Michigan as a leader in

protecting democracy and voter access in the United States; and, **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**

RESOLVED, The Detroit City Council calls on the Michigan State Legislature to pass Senate Bills 401, 402, 403 and 404 - The Michigan Voting Rights Act - before the end of the 2024 legislative session; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be forwarded to Michigan's State Senators and State Representatives, including Senator Jeremy Moss, Representative Penelope Tsernoglou, House Speaker Joe Tate, and Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks, as well as Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, Attorney General Dana Nessel, and Governor Gretchen Whitmer.