



OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 13, 2016

MEDIA CONTACT: WardHill Omni Media

LaToya Henry, (313) 447-6404

THE PEOPLE GET A VICTORY – HOUSE BILL 6066 PUSHED BACK!

“America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves.”

DETROIT -- These are the words of Abraham Lincoln, written at a time when our nation was in deep conflict within itself. We still find conflict within our nation today. The issue of voting rights, and the right to protest and dissent, is as fundamental to America as eating apple pie and vanilla ice cream. Today in Lansing, the Michigan Senate, led by Senator Arlan Meekhof, decided not to bring forth House Bill 6066 and the other bills designed to limit the ability of the people to protest or dissent. The bills, whether related to justice or workers' rights, have been taken off the table.

We continue to believe that the issue of voter fraud is a solution in search of a problem. It does not exist in the state of Michigan to warrant new restrictions, more egregious laws designed to negate opportunities as opposed to create new access to participatory democracy.

The NAACP, along with other civil rights organizations, and representatives in the House and Senate, take heart in the freezing of this unnecessary legislation by some members of the Michigan House of Representatives. While we know that there will always be those who will attempt to suppress democracy, negate the right to vote, and to diminish the will of the people to participate in the political process, we are determined to fight on. As Lincoln might hint from the halls of history, our greatest battles will be the ones we fight not by those who invade our borders but by those inside our state capitals, national halls of Congress, and those in governmental units who no longer have as their interest, the will and desires of the people.

Today was a victory for those who believe in freedom and democracy. Those who made phone calls, sent letters, and made their way to Lansing in the frigid cold are to be commended for daring to stand up, to be bold, and to say *no* to those attempting to take away their right to vote. Let it never be said that the people cannot make a difference.

For any who doubt the significance of today's event, simply reflect upon the actions of those who brought it before the House and Senate in the first place. Michigan should not be preventing the right to vote. Michigan should lead the way to the vote. The issue in our nation today is not too many people voting. The issue is not *enough* people exercising their right to vote. Let us fix the voting process. The way to fix it is by educating and training more poll workers, providing new and efficient voting machines, installing optical scanners, establishing same day registration, early voting, and ending gerrymandering and district fixing to serve a political interest.

Today, all of Michigan received an early Christmas present. The present is very simply the preservation of our right to vote. Now, let's continue to exercise that right.

###