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New Georgia Voter Law: Nonprofit Organizations Highlight Impact

As organizations committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), the 17 undersigned non-profit organizations representing over 21.1 million people are deeply concerned with recent legislation in Georgia and other states that is expected to disenfranchise many voters, including people of color.

Our organizations support creating opportunities for our fields, our members, and the patients and people they serve, including all people of color. We develop educational offerings; recruit and train the workforce; advance science; and advocate for better policies. We are dedicated in our efforts to build an equitable and inclusive community.

A key activity for all our organizations is developing and implementing an annual meeting that brings together thousands of diverse participants and exhibitors to learn, share information, debate, network, collaborate, and address key issues within our fields. Our annual meeting agendas feature robust educational, training, and scientific sessions, keynote speeches, and a range of engagement opportunities. We also feature opportunities to address diversity, equity, and inclusion and give back to our host cities and local communities of color. The economic infusion that we bring to our host cities benefits the local workforce, hospitality industry, and community.

For those of us planning events in Atlanta, the recently enacted voter law in Georgia gives us pause. Given our commitment to combatting inequities and fostering diversity, we seek cities in states that demonstrate inclusive policies. The new law is expected to disproportionately place voter restrictions on minority communities. It will also disenfranchise people who want to cast votes related to their interests in the very communities where they live. Policy like this simply goes against our core value of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- Organizations that represent patients believe this law will result in endangering some patients who exercise their right to vote in person. An individual with sickle cell disease, for example, could be thrown into a painful crisis due to temperature changes or other physical stress related to standing in line to cast a vote. People who are immunosuppressed such as transplant patients, or those living with chronic and immunocompromised conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, and cancer also may not have the physical stamina or ability to wait in line, be in public areas with others who compromise their immune systems, or may need opportunities to take medication.
- Organizations that represent health professionals, individuals with atypical or demanding schedules, and individuals who are hourly employees believe this law will affect their members' ability to vote in person.
- Organizations that represent people with disabilities believe this law will impact safe and accessible voting options, including limits on mobile voting and drop boxes and create barriers for communities who rely on absentee voting.
- Organizations dedicated to participation in government believe this law will result in unnecessary barriers to vote.
- Organizations that represent scientists believe this law is not based on actual data reflecting the security of elections.

A fundamental tenet to diversity is the ability to have voices heard. We urge the people of Georgia and policymakers to consider the impact of this new law and find ways to create a more equitable, inclusive community that will attract visitors to help Atlanta and other cities in this state thrive.

Approved by:

