



## NEWS RELEASE

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Media Contact: [mslbc1976@gmail.com](mailto:mslbc1976@gmail.com)

### **Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus Hosts Digital Dialogue on the Future of the Voting Rights Act**

**JACKSON, MS** – The Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus (MLBC) convened a virtual meeting, *Digital Dialogue: The Future of the Voting Rights Act*, to examine the state of voting rights in Mississippi and across the nation. The discussion brought together lawmakers, legal experts, advocates, and scholars to analyze the Voting Rights Act's historical importance, current challenges, and the urgent need for collective action to preserve access to the ballot box.

Moderated by Representative Jeffery Harness, the panel featured Dr. D'Andra Orey (Jackson State University), Carroll Rhodes (Attorney and Voting Rights Advocate), Jarvis Dortch (Executive Director, ACLU of Mississippi), and Amir Badat (Fair Fight Action). The conversation centered on the ongoing threats to Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act — a cornerstone provision that protects against racial discrimination in voting — and the implications of upcoming Supreme Court decisions that could reshape political representation for Black voters nationwide.

"Mississippi's history is deeply intertwined with the fight for voting rights," said MLBC Chairman Kabir Karriem. "We must remain vigilant and unified to ensure that every Mississippian has a fair opportunity to participate in our democracy."

Rep. Timaka James-Jones provided an update from the Mississippi House Select Committee on Voting Rights to kick-off the dialogue, highlighting the ongoing disenfranchisement crisis in Mississippi. "More than 52,000 Mississippians remain without voting rights. Only 207 have had those rights restored since 1997. We cannot call ourselves a democracy while tens of thousands of our citizens are locked out of it."

Panelists underscored the impact of recent legal victories and setbacks, including a federal ruling finding that Mississippi's Supreme Court districts violated Black voters' rights under Section 2. They warned, however, that the continued erosion of federal protections could weaken Black representation across local and state offices.

The discussion also addressed legislative individualism and its effect on collective Black political power. Participants urged lawmakers to unify in defense of voting rights and to educate communities on how voting connects directly to everyday issues like healthcare, jobs, and public safety.

"Section 2 has long served as a lifeline for fair representation," said Amir Badat of Fair Fight Action. "If it's gutted, the balance of power will shift dramatically — not just in Mississippi, but across the South. The time to act is now."

The Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus remains committed to protecting and expanding access to the ballot and ensuring that Mississippi's democracy reflects the voices of all its citizens.

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**The Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus** represents African American legislators in the Mississippi Legislature. The Caucus is committed to advancing equitable policy solutions that improve quality of life, strengthen communities, and promote justice across all sectors. Learn more at [www.msblackcaucus.com](http://www.msblackcaucus.com).