

Supreme Court Rejects Appeal of Texas Voter ID Law

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Photo courtesy of NPR.[/caption]

Summary: In a unanimous ruling, the Supreme Court has dismissed the appeal of a strict Texas voter ID law.

On Monday, the Supreme Court gave progressives a small win when it declined to hear the appeal of a Texas voter ID law. The Republican-backed legislation required voter ID at polling stations, and critics said that this practice was discriminatory to almost 600,000 black and Hispanic residents.

"I am extremely pleased that the justices recognize that this case does not merit review at this time," Gerry Hebert of the Campaign Legal Center told USA Today. "Now Texas, which ranks poorly in voter participation, should work to ensure that every eligible voter in the state is able to cast a ballot going forward."

All eight of the Supreme Court Justices were in favor of not hearing the case at this time. However, Chief Justice John Roberts issued a statement saying that the court would be open to review the matter in the future.

The Texas Voter ID case was seen in a lower appeals court in July 2016. The court ruled 9-6 that the 2011 Texas statute had discriminatory effects against minorities, and this was in violation of the U.S. Voting Rights Act, a federal law that forbids racial discrimination in elections. The dissenting judges said that the voter ID law was "reasonable" and that the majority was guilty of "irresponsible racial name-calling."

The law was signed by a Republican governor, and it was considered one of the strictest voting rights laws in the country. It required voters to present one of seven government-issued identification, which included a driver's license, a concealed handgun license, a passport, and a military ID. Other IDs such as university ID cards were not accepted at polling stations.

The law was challenged by civil rights groups as well as the Department of Justice and President Barack Obama, but proponents of the law said it was necessary to prevent fraud.

While progressives may be excited about this week's decision, the case could be reexamined in the future, especially now that Republican Donald Trump has taken over the White House administration.

Texas is not the only state that has been embroiled in voter ID controversy. North Carolina enacted a similar voting restriction, which was also struck down and is now in the appeals process.

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What do you think of voter ID laws? Let us know in the comments below.