

Civil Rights Groups Seek Federal Injunction Blocking

Georgia Photo ID Law

Voting Rights Lawyers Say Measure Is Still Unconstitutional

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ATLANTA – A coalition of civil rights groups and private attorneys filed a motion in U.S. District Court in Rome, Georgia, today seeking a federal injunction to block implementation of the state's latest photo identification requirement for in-person voting. The groups, who are acting on behalf of Georgia voters, charge that the state law known as S.B. 84 constitutes a poll tax and places an unconstitutional burden on the right to vote.

Today's motion is the latest development in the ongoing lawsuit, Common Cause/Georgia v. Billups, 4:05-CV-201.

“Senate Bill 84’s modifications to the voter ID requirements are insignificant corrections to a deeply flawed statute and fail to remove all of the unconstitutional burdens in the law passed last year by the Georgia General Assembly,” said Neil Bradley, Associate Director of the American Civil Liberties Union Voting Rights Project in Atlanta which is helping to challenge the measure.

Last fall, U.S. District Court Judge Harold Murphy issued a preliminary injunction blocking the original Georgia photo ID law, ruling that voting rights advocates have a “substantial likelihood” of succeeding in court on the merits of their claims that the law is an unconstitutional burden on the right to vote and constitutes a poll tax. In response to that ruling, the General Assembly passed S.B. 84 in January, making photo identification available free of charge. However, the new law still fails to address many of the issues raised in the original lawsuit, according to the advocates.

In the motion filed today, attorneys argue that S.B. 84 violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the 24th Amendment by imposing requirements for voting that disproportionately affect Georgia’s elderly, low-income and minority voters.

“Senate Bill 84 doesn’t address the root problem of Georgia’s photo ID requirement,” said Bradley, “The law continues to impose an unnecessary burden on voters and does nothing to protect against fraud in voting. No amount of tinkering can cure the many flaws in this unconstitutional statute.”

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.A copy of the brief in support of the motion for a preliminary injunction against SB 84, as well as a detailed timeline and fact sheet on the case can be found at:

<http://www.votingrights.org/news/?newsitem=60>

Other media contacts available for interview include:

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