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*This is especially true for AASCU students who are the new majority of America seeking a bachelor's degree and beyond—first-generation, low-income students, and/or students of color. It is critical that these students become engaged citizens in a democratic and socially just society.*

**Mildred García, Ed.D., President, AASCU**

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### **Statement on Voting Rights by Higher Education Organizations**

April 13, 2021

“Our educational institutions aspire to help create a just, vibrant, and democratic society. Colleges and universities believe that fostering informed civic engagement is a central goal of a postsecondary education. We teach students that there is no more important or better way to nourish a flourishing democracy than by encouraging all eligible voters to exercise their right to cast a ballot for the candidates of their choice.

We back up our rhetoric with action. Colleges often lead voter registration drives, serve as polling places in their communities, and act as the public square for important civic conversations. Indeed, every one of the presidential and vice presidential debates held in this century has been on a college campus. Students themselves often play critical roles in these efforts. College students were at the forefront of the struggle to ensure that the constitutional right of Black citizens to vote was upheld in states and communities that sought to curtail those rights. The cost of that work was measured in ballots cast, but also in blood and lives lost.

Expanding suffrage to include all citizens is a hallmark of American history. While not rapid, smooth, or easy, four separate constitutional amendments and landmark legislation such as the Voting Rights Act of 1965 have enabled more Americans to participate in our democracy.

For these reasons, just as the integrity of our electoral system is essential, we strongly oppose the many efforts currently underway across the nation to suppress voting by qualified voters. We stand with all who seek to expand rather than restrict voting and civic participation. We are particularly concerned with proposals that would roll back some of that progress by raising barriers to student voting, including prohibiting students from using their campus addresses to register or qualify for absentee ballots.

Exercising the right to vote should not be controversial or challenging. The right to vote defines us as a nation. We call on lawmakers to take action to ensure that civic participation in America continues to move forward, not backward, and that the United States has the most inclusive and equitable democracy in the world.”

On behalf of:

Achieving the Dream  
ACPA-College Student Educators International

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education  
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers  
American Association of Community Colleges  
American Association of State Colleges and Universities  
American Association of University Professors  
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges  
American Council on Education  
American Dental Education Association  
American Indian Higher Education Association  
APPA, "Leadership in Educational Facilities"  
Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors  
Association of American Colleges and Universities  
Association of American Universities  
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities  
Association of Community College Trustees  
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges  
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts  
Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Pennsylvania  
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities  
Association of Research Libraries  
Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions  
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health  
Coalition of Urban & Metropolitan Universities  
Common App  
Council for Advancement and Support of Education  
Council for Higher Education Accreditation  
Council for Opportunity in Education  
Council of Graduate Schools  
Council of Independent Colleges  
Council on Social Work Education  
EDUCAUSE  
ETS  
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities  
NAFSA: Association of International Educators  
NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education  
National Association for College Admission Counseling  
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education  
National Association of College and University Business Officers  
National Association of Colleges and Employers  
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities  
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators  
National Collegiate Athletic Association  
Phi Beta Kappa Society  
Physician Assistant Education Association  
TMCF