

8085:12/81

AMERICAN BAPTIST RESOLUTION ON THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Congress adopted the Voting Rights Act in 1965 as a result of tremendous pressure brought by the civil rights movement. The act eliminates literacy tests, poll taxes, grandfather clauses and other devices used to disenfranchise Blacks and other minorities. In 1975, Congress added a provision that bilingual ballots be provided in areas heavily populated by minorities whose first language is not English. The Act applies to all fifty (50) states.

As American Baptists we declare the right to vote to be a basic human right, and we support programs and measures to assure this right.¹

Therefore, in the light of the critical need for the Voting Rights Act and its proven effectiveness, the Board of National Ministries of the American Baptist Churches calls upon American Baptists individually and corporately:

1. To urge the Justice Department to strengthen and increase its enforcement of the Voting Rights Act; and,
2. To urge all states to bring their laws and practices into conformity with the Voting Rights Act.

Adopted by the General Board of the American Baptist Churches - December 1981
152 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstention
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - September 1992
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - September 1996
(General Board Reference # - 8085-12/81)

Policy Base

American Baptist Policy Statement on Human Rights

As American Baptists we declare the following rights to be basic human rights, and we will support programs and measures to assure these rights:

11. The right of citizenship in a nation, to participate in the political process, to form political parties, to have a voice in decisions made in the political parties, to have a voice in decisions made in the political arenas, to be secure from fear of deportation or expulsion, to emigrate and to have political asylum;

1 See American Baptist Policy Statement on Human Rights - Adopted December 1976.
