



Beaufort County Democratic Party's Statement on Calling for the Passage of For the People Act As we Celebrate Juneteenth

For Release: June 18, 2021

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This weekend we celebrate Juneteenth, which marks the emancipation of those who were enslaved in the United States. In Beaufort County, the plantation life that depended on hundreds of enslaved African Americans was finally ended with President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. The spirit of resistance, however, has always endured even as Beaufort was the first Confederate city to fall into Union hands with the preservation of the Gullah traditions.

This week's legislation recognizing Juneteenth (June 19) as a federal holiday is a step in the right direction, but as we remember our history as a lesson for the future, we are sober about the fact that South Carolina – among many other states – is seeking to continue to silence the voices of the minorities and the disenfranchised through laws aimed at voter suppression. The only way for our democracy to prevail and represent all Americans is by ensuring that every citizen has the right to cast their vote unencumbered by artificial barriers. We call upon our Senators to vote for S. 1, the *For the People Act*, historic legislation that would make it easier to vote in federal elections, limit congressional gerrymandering, overhaul campaign finance laws, increase safeguards from foreign interference into our elections, and strengthen the ethics rules around elections.

“Until everyone in South Carolina and Beaufort County has the ability to cast their vote in elections that are free of suppressive maneuvers and arbitrary rules, we will not truly achieve the meaning of Juneteenth,” said Mayra Rivera Vazquez, Chairperson of the Beaufort County Democratic Party. “We call upon our Senate delegation, Senators Lindsey Graham and Tim Scott, to vote for this bill demonstrating their commitment to eliminating barriers to voting in our country.”

Countless polls demonstrate up to 80 percent of Americans support preventing foreign interference in elections, limiting the influence of money in politics, increasing election security, providing an early voting period for all federal elections, same day registration, and nonpartisan redistricting commissions, yet the U.S. Senate appears poised to shoot down the *For the People Act* that was passed in the House of Representatives with the aim of achieving those goals. “We need to recognize that voting should be an easy course of action – but it doesn't work that way,” Rivera Vazquez said. “There are regulations in place that make it more difficult for some people to vote and we know that is not by accident. The passage of the *For the People Act* will at least put us on the right path in regulating federal elections and I can think of no better way to celebrate the meaning of Juneteenth than making that a reality.”