

For Immediate Release

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Voting Rights Institute Receives Prestigious MacArthur Grant

Today, the **MacArthur Foundation** demonstrated its commitment to protecting voting rights by awarding a \$1 million grant to the **Voting Rights Institute**.

Launched in October 2015, the Voting Rights Institute is a joint project of Georgetown University Law Center, the American Constitution Society for Law and Policy and the Campaign Legal Center. Established in response to the Supreme Court's decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which nullified a key provision of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the Institute offers opportunities for students, recent graduates and fellows to engage in litigation and policy work in the field of voting rights and to educate attorneys about the skills and best practices of voting rights advocates.

The initial phase of the Voting Rights Institute began in 2014 with a series of training sessions in New York, Columbus, Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and Miami. In 2015, a training session was held in Chicago. To date, more than 400 attendees representing a diverse group of attorneys, law students and voting rights advocates have taken part in these activities. Georgetown Law has also provided a venue for training institutes.

As part of this effort, the Voting Rights Institute is also launching a new website, www.votingrightsinitiative.org, which provides voting rights information to the public, resources for attorneys working on voting rights litigation (including expert witness documents and sample legal documents), and a tool for the public to report voting rights violations. It also provides updates on events, publications and other resources to elevate public awareness of voter identification laws and voter registration restrictions. The site leverages a technology platform developed by **Pro Bono Net**, which is used to support broad-based networks of legal aid, civil rights and pro bono lawyers.

Georgetown Law Dean William M. Treanor said, "I could not be more pleased and proud that the MacArthur Foundation has chosen to honor the Voting Rights Institute and its crucial mission with this generous grant. The motto at Georgetown Law is, 'Law is but the means, justice is the end.' And nowhere is the need for justice greater than when it comes to protecting and preserving the right to vote."

ACS President Caroline Fredrickson said, "This grant represents the tireless commitment of countless individuals to the idea that every American should have a voice in our political system. The Voting Rights Act — one of the most effective pieces of legislation ever passed — may be hobbled, but our dedication to the underlying democratic principles will endure."

Gerry Hebert, executive director of the Campaign Legal Center said, "We are incredibly grateful to the MacArthur Foundation for investing in this important work. The Voting Rights Institute is preparing the next generation of attorneys, experts and activists to preserve our democracy and protect the ability of all Americans to vote. By providing resources, litigating, educating, training and conducting new and original research, the VRI is growing the pool of voting rights attorneys and experts at this crucial time when they are needed the most."

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About Pro Bono Net

Pro Bono Net is a national non-profit organization dedicated to increasing access to justice for the disadvantaged. Through innovative technology solutions and expertise in building and mobilizing justice networks, Pro Bono Net transforms the way legal help reaches the underserved. Our comprehensive programs, including www.probono.net, www.lawhelp.org and www.lawhelpinteractive.org, enable legal advocates to make a stronger impact, increase volunteer participation, and empower the public with resources and self-help tools to improve their lives. For more information, please visit www.probono.net.