

# ACORN

Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now  
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Chicago, Illinois 60605  
(312) 939-7488

November 14, 1994

Dr. Ronald D. Michaelson  
Executive Director  
Illinois State Board of Elections  
1020 South Spring Street  
Springfield, Illinois 62704

Dear Dr. Michaelson:

As the chief elections officer for the State of Illinois, you are responsible for coordinating the state's duties under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 ("NVRA"), 42 U. S. C. 1973gg et seq. On behalf of ourselves, as individual Illinois residents, and on behalf of ACORN, we are writing to notify you that the State of Illinois is likely to be in violation of the NVRA beginning on January 1, 1995. We base this belief on the following facts:

1. The NVRA requires, among other things, that the State of Illinois establish procedures to provide voter registration opportunities to persons who are applying, renewing, or changing their address with the respect to drivers' licenses or state-issued identification cards. The NVRA further requires state and local agencies to offer voter registration in conjunction with applications for service or assistance, recertifications, renewals or changes of address in public assistance programs or state-funded programs for persons with disabilities. To date, the state has failed to enact legislation that sets forth the procedures that state and local agencies must follow in registering voters. Based on information and belief, we conclude that it is highly unlikely the state will enact any statutes, or otherwise implement or cause to be implemented procedures required by the NVRA before January 1, 1995.

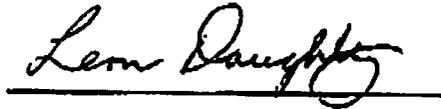
2. The NVRA requires the State of Illinois to designate additional state or local offices (such as unemployment compensation offices, public schools, or libraries) to provide voter registration. To date, the state has failed to designate such additional offices that will provide voter registration. Based on information and belief, we conclude that it is highly unlikely that the state will enact such legislation before January 1, 1995.

3. There are a number of state statutes that conflict with the NVRA and will prevent the state from being in compliance with the federal act. To date, the state has failed to enact legislation to conform the state's laws with the procedures required by the NVRA. Based on information and belief, we conclude that it is highly unlikely that the state will enact such legislation before January 1, 1995.

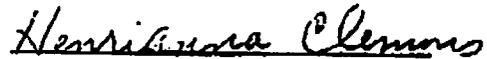
ACORN and its members are vitally concerned with the degree to which low and moderate income people can fully participate in elections. ACORN and its members believe that without full implementation of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) their ability to participate in elections will be adversely affected. Accordingly, ACORN and its members will pursue every available avenue, including litigation if necessary, to defend our rights both individually and collectively. We have retained Barack Obama of Davis, Miner, Barnhill & Galland as legal counsel in this matter.

We urge the state to take all necessary steps to conform the state's laws to the requirements of the NVRA and to develop procedures that will fully implement the Act's voter registration requirements. In particular, we understand that the provisions included in Senate Bill 1159, which has already passed the Illinois House, would bring the state into compliance. As you know, the NVRA is very clear in its mandate and enforcement provisions. Correcting the violations described in this letter in a timely manner could avoid costly litigation and will lead to greater voter participation from all segments of Illinois.

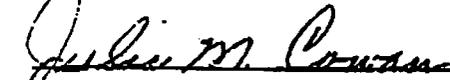
Sincerely,



Leon Doughty



Henrianna Clemons



Julia M. Cowan



Theodore Thomas

cc: Governor Jim Edgar  
Michael Madigan  
Pate Philip  
Emil Jones  
Lee Daniels