Automatic Voter Registration Becomes Law in Illinois
This morning, Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner signed the bipartisan Senate Bill 1933 to create Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) in Illinois! As a steering committee member of the Just Democracy Illinois coalition, Chicago Lawyers' Committee is proud to be part of this momentous accomplishment for voting access in Illinois.

With this law, eligible Illinois residents will automatically become registered to vote when they go to get a driver’s license or when they interact with other state agencies. The law could impact as many as one million eligible voters, many of whom are people of color and low-income residents who have traditionally faced obstacles in the voter registration process.

After the Civil War, laws were passed across the nation to suppress the votes of freed slaves, immigrants, and people of color. Improving the fairness of voter
registration is an important step in the process of healing from our history of disenfranchisement. AVR will also update and modernize our outdated voter registration system, strengthen security, and save time and money for our state.

We are thankful for the hard work of community members, advocates, legislators, and government agencies who have partnered on this important initiative. We are particularly proud to work with Just Democracy Illinois, a coalition led by a steering committee that includes Chicago Lawyers' Committee, Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Chicago, CHANGE Illinois, Chicago Votes, Common Cause Illinois, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, and Illinois PIRG.

Standing up to the Pence-Kobach Commission
Last week, the Illinois State Board of Elections (SBOE) reviewed Kris Kobach's renewed request for the personal information of 8 million Illinois voters at its public meeting downtown. In a letter signed by Director of Voting Rights and Civic Empowerment Ami Gandhi, the Just Democracy Illinois coalition detailed concerns about the federal Commission and requested that SBOE turn down the Kris Kobach's request. SBOE announced that it will ask the Commission for details about how it specifically plans to use Illinois voters’ personal information and safeguard voters’ privacy and security. We are encouraged that SBOE is taking seriously the concerns of citizens and communities across Illinois, and we will continue our advocacy to protect voter data.

Election Day Registration Gets a Boost
Good news: Thanks to a recent Seventh Circuit decision, Election Day Registration (EDR) is on stronger footing in Illinois. On August 4, 2017, the Seventh Circuit *vacated* the district court’s preliminary injunction that tried to block polling-place EDR weeks before the November 2016 election, slamming the plaintiffs for their “wait-and-hurry-up” approach. The district court case is still proceeding, and it is still essential to protect EDR in Illinois. After filing an amicus brief with the district court in this case, we have continued partnering with Illinois election authorities and conducting outreach to voters and community partners to increase awareness about EDR. Over 100,000 Illinois voters used EDR to register and vote in November 2016.

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**Explore Our 2016 Illinois Voter Data Site**

![45 issues reported from Illinois counties](image1)

- **Issues reported by**
  - Black or African American: 9
  - White: 20
  - Hispanic or Latino: 6
  - Asian: 0
  - Other: 1
  - Not reported: 9

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During the 2016 election cycle, our Election Protection volunteers answered thousands of voter questions related to voter intimidation, language barriers, lack of access to polling places, and voter registration problems. In Illinois, problems were reported in 61 counties, including numerous problems reported by people of color. You can explore this data and selected voter stories visually through our online platform at www.electionprotectionillinois.org. Read coverage of our data in Chicago Daily Law Bulletin.

Support Civil Rights at Our Annual Event

On Tuesday, October 10, join Chicago Lawyers' Committee for an evening of celebration and inspiration at our annual event, Democracy Fights Back, at City Winery. Get your ticket here!