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CARDIN STATEMENT ON THE SUPREME COURT RULING ON THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT SECTION 5

*Washington, DC - U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD), a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, released the following statement today after the 8-1 Supreme Court ruling on Section 5 of **The Voting Rights Act**.*

"A near-unanimous Supreme Court made the right decision today in not overturning a 44-year-old law created and extended to prevent discrimination at the voting booth. However, I was disappointed that the tone of the Court's decision, including the sole dissenter, called into question the constitutionality of Section 5.

"Voting is one of the most fundamental rights granted to every American, making **The Voting Rights Act** one of the most important pieces of legislation in our country. Congress held multiple hearings, heard from experts, and considered numerous amendments before passing the reauthorization of this legislation that was signed into law by President Bush. **The Voting Rights Act** has established extensive federal oversight of elections in order to prevent any form of discriminatory voting practices. More than four decades after the Act became law, these safeguards are still essential in many jurisdictions to ensure free and fair elections by protecting individual voter's rights."

Section 5, also known as the "pre-clearance" section, is arguably the most influential provision of **The Voting Rights Act**. Section 5 requires jurisdictions with a history of discrimination to demonstrate to the Justice Department or the District Court of the District of Columbia that any changes to the voting process do not have a discriminatory purpose or effect.

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