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## Governor McAuliffe Statement on the Virginia Supreme Court Decision on the Restoration of Civil Rights

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Governor Terry McAuliffe released the following statement today following the Virginia Supreme Court decision in *Howell v. McAuliffe*:

"Once again, the Virginia Supreme Court has placed Virginia as an outlier in the struggle for civil and human rights. It is a disgrace that the Republican leadership of Virginia would file a lawsuit to deny more than 200,000 of their own citizens the right to vote. And I cannot accept that this overtly political action could succeed in suppressing the voices of many thousands of men and women who had rejoiced with their families earlier this year when their rights were restored.

"Forty states give citizens who have made mistakes and paid their debt to society a straightforward process for restoring voting rights. I remain committed to moving past our Commonwealth's history of injustice to embrace an honest process for restoring the rights of our citizens, and I believe history and the vast majority of Virginians are on our side.

"Despite the Court's ruling, we have the support of the state's four leading constitutional experts, including A.E. Dick Howard, who drafted the current Virginia Constitution. They are convinced that our action is within the constitutional authority granted to the Office of the Governor.

"The men and women whose voting rights were restored by my executive action should not be alarmed. I will expeditiously sign nearly 13,000 individual orders to restore the fundamental rights of the citizens who have had their rights restored and registered to vote. And I will continue to sign orders until I have completed restoration for all 200,000 Virginians. My faith remains strong in all of our citizens to choose their leaders, and I am prepared to back up that faith with my executive pen. The struggle for civil rights has always been a long and difficult one, but the fight goes on."

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GOVERNOR TERRY MCAULIFFE

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