

March 28, 2016

Mayor Greg Stanton
City of Phoenix
Phoenix City Hall
200 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, Arizona 85003

Dear Mayor Stanton,

The National Association of Social Workers, Arizona Chapter (NASWAZ) thanks you for submitting a request that the Department of Justice investigate the events of the 2016 presidential preference election in Maricopa County, Arizona. NASWAZ thanks you for your leadership and for speaking out against this historic act of apparent voter suppression for marginalized communities in Maricopa County.

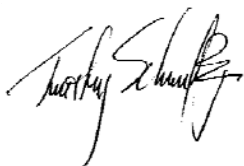
Social workers are committed to promoting social justice and reducing discrimination in all forms. The location and accessibility of available polling places is of great concern to NASWAZ. The polling place to resident ratio was more favorable in majority Anglo and affluent areas. Historically marginalized and underrepresented populations such as those of low-socioeconomic status and minorities were left to bear the burden of the longest wait times to vote. This fact harkens back to the pre-Voting Rights Act era, where minorities were threatened and intimidated not to vote by such policies as polling site locations and so-called "literacy tests."

Of particular concern is the apparent voter suppression that took place. American's right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy. The blatant disregard of this right in the name of allocating dollars elsewhere is unconscionable and unacceptable.

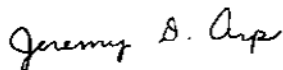
It is apparent that participation in Arizona's presidential preference election became a function of privilege; available only to those who had the luxury of time, physical stamina, and geographic advantage to stand in line for hours. We do not know how many people went home, discouraged by long lines. We do not know how many sacrificed their right to vote due to an inability to physically stand in line for hours, with no available water or preference given for those with disabilities, pregnancies, or other vulnerable conditions. Participation in America's democracy is a human and civil right. That privilege should be an accessible unalienable right on which no demographic, be it socio-economic status, race, or physical ability is dependent.

Thank you again very much for your leadership for human dignity and our civil rights.

Sincerely,



Timothy J. Schmaltz, MSW
President, NASW Arizona Chapter



Jeremy D. Arp, MSW, ACSW
Executive Director, NASW Arizona Chapter



Alexandria Kassman, MSW
Voter Engagement Committee Chair, NASW Arizona Chapter