Dear Mr. Attorney General and Mr. Assistant Attorney General,

I write to express my profound concern and disappointment that the United States Department of Justice is abandoning its mission and mandate to protect the voting rights of minorities across our nation.

Exactly seven years ago today, the United States Supreme Court destroyed what I considered to be the heart and soul of the Voting Rights Act – the preclearance formula. This process ensured that the burden was not on those citizens whose rights were – or will be – violated. In justifying the *Shelby v. Holder* decision, the Majority argued that blatant, racist discrimination is rare; looking at the current state of our country, we know this to be false.

In the absence of a restored, operational Voting Rights Act, the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division – particularly the Voting Section – is the last line of defense in countering persistent, pervasive tactics to construct barriers that prevent all Americans from exercising their constitutional right to vote. It is heartbreaking to witness this Department’s touting of minimal, sub-standard actions as it seemingly deserts its mission to uphold voting rights laws. Instead, the Department defers to private advocates’ desperate efforts to stem the relentless “Hydra” of attacks on minority voting rights across our country, which Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg correctly predicted, would reemerge from the shadows.

History will not be kind when it studies this Department’s reckless abandonment of its duty to be a fair, impartial, protector in guaranteeing that all Americans are able to realize the promises of the United States Constitution. In our country, the right to vote is precious – almost sacred. Countless people marched and protested for this right. Some gave a little blood, and far too many lost their lives. Around the globe, generations of U.S. officials boasted of this legacy and progress. Today, the world is horrified in watching Americans – especially people of color – once again stand in immovable lines and experience undeniable, targeted, systematic barriers to democracy.
The record is clear. A rampant war is being waged against minorities’ voting rights in my home state of Georgia and across the nation. Success requires vigilance, consistency, and commitment, but the Department of Justice is failing to show up for duty. It is a shame and a disgrace. I urge you to correct course and take action. Time is of the essence to preserve the integrity and promises of our democracy.

Sincerely,

John Lewis
Member of Congress