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July 10, 2014

Attorney General Eric Holder
Civil Rights Division
Disability Rights Section - NYA
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20530

Re: Complaint regarding voting rights violations by the Los Angeles Superior Court

Dear Attorney General Holder:

With this letter we are transmitting a formal complaint against the Los Angeles Superior Court for systematic violations of several provisions of federal voting rights laws. The primary violations are: (1) using a literacy test; and (2) not providing reasonable accommodations of persons with disabilities in registering to vote.

Judges in the Probate Division of the Los Angeles Superior Court are routinely issuing orders disqualifying persons with developmental disabilities who are adjudged to be limited conservatees. The Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters is then notified by the court of the names of persons the court has disqualified.

Over the past several years, scores of adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities have been declared to be disqualified. These orders are based on judges finding that the adult in question "is not capable of completing an affidavit of voter registration." This is a test which violates federal law. We have also found that court-appointed attorneys who represent these adults in conservatorship proceedings have been instructed by judges that a conservatee may not receive assistance in completing the registration form.

We have alerted the judges, attorneys, and agencies that are involved in administering the Limited Conservatorship System that the policies and practices of this system violate federal voting rights laws. We have also notified the California Attorney General and other state agencies of this problem. We have not received any indication that these illegal practices will stop or that past injustices will be corrected.

As a result, we are filing this complaint and are asking for intervention by the United States Department of Justice. American citizens are being disenfranchised because of their disabilities. We are asking the Department of Justice to instruct the Los Angeles Superior Court to remedy this problem, and if it does not, for your office to take appropriate legal action against the Superior Court.

The Superior Court is ignoring the California Secretary of State's directive: "There is no literacy requirement for participation in the elections process." Perhaps intervention by your office will get the attention of the judges and cause the court to change its policies and practices.

People with developmental disabilities in Los Angeles County are relying on you. Please help them to retain or regain their fundamental right to vote.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nora J. Baladerian, Ph.D.".

NORA J. BALADERIAN, PH.D.
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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas F. Coleman".

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