

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mi Familia Vota, Kristian Ramos, 202-510-2809, kristian@mifamiliavota.org
Free Speech For People, Edward Erikson, 202-420-9947, press@freespeechforpeople.org

Voting rights organizations express profound disagreement with judge's decision to deny relief in voter intimidation lawsuit against President Trump

Washington, D.C. (Oct. 30, 2020)-- Senior Judge Richard Leon of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia denied a motion for a temporary restraining order, preliminary injunction, and declaratory judgment filed by Free Speech For People on behalf of Mi Familia Vota Education Fund and two individual plaintiffs against President Trump, Attorney General Barr, and Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf. The lawsuit alleged that the defendants violated the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871, and the First, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the US Constitution, when (between them) they threatened to send law enforcement to polling places; encouraged violent white supremacists to "stand by"; publicly discredited, sabotaged, and threatened to block the count of votes cast by mail; and rejected the nation's unbroken 231-year history of peaceful transfers of power by refusing to commit to honor or recognize the legitimacy of the results of the presidential election.

The plaintiffs also sought an order restraining the defendants from deploying federal law enforcement agents at or near polling places for the purpose of impeding or delaying voters or other improper purposes; sending federal employees to block the delivery of ballots or interfere in the counting of ballots; or taking any actions that may limit the speed or reliability of mail delivery for the next two weeks. Further, the plaintiffs sought an order restraining President Trump from using official White House public communications channels, to make statements or suggest that lawful mail-in votes will not be counted, or from urging individuals to bring weapons to polling places, block access to polling places, intimidate voters, or otherwise interfere with voting.

"We disagree with Judge Leon's decision in this case," says Héctor Sánchez Barba, the Executive Director and CEO of Mi Familia Vota. "The evidence is overwhelming that court intervention here was necessary to stop this illegal voter intimidation by President Trump, Attorney General Barr, and Acting Secretary Wolf. Despite this ruling, we will remain vigilant in fighting to protect the right to vote and our democracy."

"President Donald J. Trump and his political appointees are trying to prevent a free and fair 2020 election by intimidating and threatening eligible voters, through violently suppressing opposition, sabotaging a free and fair election, and rejecting a peaceful transfer of power," said Ron Fein, Legal Director of Free Speech For People, who argued the motion. "We're extremely disappointed that the court has decided to allow President Trump and his officials to continue to threaten to send law enforcement to polling places, encourage armed vigilantes and white supremacists to 'stand by' for action, and to nullify the votes of millions of Americans who cast their votes by mail."

As a result of this lawsuit, the Department of Justice, representing Trump, Barr, and Wolf, has acknowledged, in a legal filing before the court, that they are legally prohibited from sending any "troops or armed men" to any voting location, "unless such force be necessary to repel armed enemies of the United States."

The lawyers for the plaintiffs also include John Bonifaz, Ben Clements, and Gillian Cassell-Stiga of Free Speech For People; Matthew Brinckerhoff, Sam Shapiro, Jonathan Abady, and Marissa Benavides of Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel LLP, in New York City; and Cyrus Mehri and Michael Lieder of Mehri Skalet PLLC in Washington, D.C.

An amicus brief in support of the plaintiffs was submitted by the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action and the Workers' Circle.

Major case documents are available at <https://freespeechforpeople.org/mi-familia-vota-v-trump/>.