

RELEASE IN FULL

Proposal to establish a Voting Rights Center at Stanford Law School in memory of Stephanie Tubbs Jones

Executive Summary



“If in fact we see it as our obligation to secure democracy around the world, to monitor and oversee free and fair elections in other countries, surely we must ensure, protect and guarantee the right to vote right here at home.”

CONGRESSWOMAN STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES
1949-2008

OVERVIEW

Stanford Law School is currently seeking support to establish a new Voting Rights Center in memory of former five-term Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D-OH). A lawyer by training, Tubbs Jones began her career as an assistant prosecutor in Cuyahoga County from 1976 to 1979. She went on to serve for over a decade as a judge on the Cleveland Municipal Court and was then appointed as Cleveland's chief prosecutor before being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. The first African-American woman to represent Ohio in the U.S. Congress, Representative Tubbs Jones was also the first African-American prosecutor for a major U.S. city. She is perhaps best remembered for her tenacious challenge to the 2004 presidential electoral vote in Ohio, which resulted in her lead sponsorship of the Count Every Vote Act of 2005. The effort to establish this Center is being undertaken in partnership with a group of Representative Tubbs Jones's close friends and long-time admirers.

Why Stanford Law School? This effort grows out of the long and distinguished tradition of constitutional law scholarship at Stanford, and, more recently, leadership in the field of voting rights law and policy. The creation of a Voting Rights Center would enable Stanford Law School to continue this tradition by directing attention to fundamental questions about voting, democracy, and legal regulation of the political process. These questions involve issues such as voter registration and qualifications, voting technology, election administration, and rules for ensuring effective participation. The Center would advance this mission through events and activities that foster scholarship, generate public discussion, and provide opportunities for students, scholars, legislators and policy makers to engage in analysis and discussion of the Constitution and the panoply of federal voting-related laws including the Voting Rights Act, the National Voter Registration Act, the Help America Vote Act, and related statutes.



“Stephanie Tubbs Jones embodied the best of public service in her trailblazing career as a congresswoman, prosecutor, and fierce defender of every American's right to vote. Her tireless work will live on through The Stephanie Tubbs Jones Voting Rights Center at Stanford Law School, dedicated to the issues of voting rights, and free and fair elections, the very foundations of our democracy.”

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON

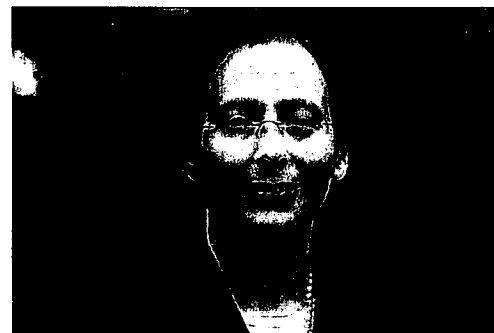
Stanford Law School

Justice. Innovation. Lead.

FACULTY LEADERSHIP

Pamela S. Karlan, the Kenneth and Harle Montgomery Professor of Public Interest Law at Stanford Law School, will serve as the inaugural director of the Voting Rights Center at Stanford Law School.

A productive scholar and award-winning teacher, Professor Karlan is one of the nation's leading experts on voting and the political process. She has served as a commissioner on the California Fair Political Practices Commission and as an assistant counsel and cooperating attorney for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. Professor Karlan is the co-author of three leading casebooks on constitutional law, constitutional litigation, and the law of democracy, as well as more than sixty scholarly articles.



*Pamela S. Karlan, Kenneth and Harle Montgomery
Professor of Public Interest Law*

Professor Karlan also remains an active member of the Supreme Court Bar and serves as co-director of Stanford Law School's renowned Supreme Court Litigation Clinic, currently the nation's most active Supreme Court appellate practice. She has argued seven cases before the Court, three of which have focused on voting rights issues: *Chisom v. Romer* (1991); *Morse v. Republican Party of Virginia* (2005); and *Riley v. Kennedy* (2008). She has also represented either the parties or amici curiae in an additional fifteen voting rights cases on issues ranging from challenges to voter IDs to gerrymandering to defending the Voting Rights Act.

Before joining the Stanford Law School faculty in 1998, Professor Karlan was a professor of law at the University of Virginia School of Law and served as a law clerk to Justice Harry A. Blackmun of the U.S. Supreme Court and Judge Abraham D. Sofaer of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the American Law Institute and serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the American Constitution Society. Professor Karlan received her BA (1980) and MA and JD degrees (1984) from Yale University.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

In particular, the Center will sponsor three kinds of activities:

Conferences. The Center will sponsor 1-2 conferences each academic year, each drawing scholars and stakeholders from the legal, legislative, and policy-making communities. These events will be public and will focus on real world implications of voting rights litigation, legislation and policy. Potential topics include lessons learned from the 2000, 2004, and 2008 elections about continued barriers to effective registration and access to the polls, offender re-enfranchisement, the politics and effects of voter identification requirements, and comparative election administration.

Conversations. Each month the Center will hold one or two "Conversations" with leading scholars, legislators and policy makers in the field of voting rights. The format will be informal and the target audience primarily Stanford Law School faculty, fellows and students. Among the topics covered will be how redistricting can affect voter participation; voter participation in direct democracy; and the ability of elderly citizens to participate in the electoral process.

Empirical Research. The Center plans to host 2 postdoctoral fellows who will spend 1-2 years working on research projects related to the field of voting rights. Stanford Law School expects to draw to campus young scholars from a variety of fields—including law, political science, economics, computer science, sociology, and communications to name a few—who will contribute to and participate in the intellectual life of the center generally and work on policy-focused empirical research. The Center plans to publish a series of White Papers for distribution to local, state, and federal governments to help inform voting-rights law and policy efforts across the country.

For more information about this important memorial effort, contact Julia Erwin-Weiner, Associate Dean for External Relations, Stanford Law School, at 650.725.8985 or jeweiner@stanford.edu.