

fined not more than \$5,000, or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

(b) Destroying, defacing, mutilating, or altering ballots or official voting records

Whoever, within a year following an election in a political subdivision in which an observer has been assigned (1) destroys, defaces, mutilates, or otherwise alters the marking of a paper ballot which has been cast in such election, or (2) alters any official record of voting in such election tabulated from a voting machine or otherwise, shall be fined not more than \$5,000, or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

(c) Conspiring to violate or interfere with secured rights

Whoever conspires to violate the provisions of subsection (a) or (b) of this section, or interferes with any right secured by section 1973, 1973a, 1973b, 1973c, 1973h, or 1973i(a) of this title shall be fined not more than \$5,000, or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

(d) Civil action by Attorney General for preventive relief; injunctive and other relief

Whenever any person has engaged or there are reasonable grounds to believe that any person is about to engage in any act or practice prohibited by section 1973, 1973a, 1973b, 1973c, 1973e,¹ 1973h, 1973i, or subsection (b) of this section, the Attorney General may institute for the United States, or in the name of the United States, an action for preventive relief, including an application for a temporary or permanent injunction, restraining order, or other order, and including an order directed to the State and State or local election officials to require them (1) to permit persons listed under subchapters I-A to I-C of this chapter to vote and (2) to count such votes.

(e) Proceeding by Attorney General to enforce the counting of ballots of registered and eligible persons who are prevented from voting

Whenever in any political subdivision in which there are observers appointed pursuant to subchapters I-A to I-C of this chapter any persons allege to such an observer within forty-eight hours after the closing of the polls that notwithstanding (1) their listing under subchapters I-A to I-C of this chapter or registration by an appropriate election official and (2) their eligibility to vote, they have not been permitted to vote in such election, the observer shall forthwith notify the Attorney General if such allegations in his opinion appear to be well founded. Upon receipt of such notification, the Attorney General may forthwith file with the district court an application for an order providing for the marking, casting, and counting of the ballots of such persons and requiring the inclusion of their votes in the total vote before the results of such election shall be deemed final and any force or effect given thereto. The district court shall hear and determine such matters immediately after the filing of such application. The remedy provided in this subsection shall not preclude any remedy available under State or Federal law.

¹ See References in Text note below.

(f) Jurisdiction of district courts; exhaustion of administrative or other remedies unnecessary

The district courts of the United States shall have jurisdiction of proceedings instituted pursuant to this section and shall exercise the same without regard to whether a person asserting rights under the provisions of subchapters I-A to I-C of this chapter shall have exhausted any administrative or other remedies that may be provided by law.

(Pub. L. 89-110, title I, §12, Aug. 6, 1965, 79 Stat. 443; Pub. L. 90-284, title I, §103(c), Apr. 11, 1968, 82 Stat. 75; renumbered title I, Pub. L. 91-285, §2, June 22, 1970, 84 Stat. 314; Pub. L. 109-246, §3(d)(3), (4), (e)(2), July 27, 2006, 120 Stat. 580.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 1973e of this title, referred to in subsec. (d), was repealed by Pub. L. 109-246, §3(c), July 27, 2006, 120 Stat. 580.

AMENDMENTS

2006—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 109-246, §3(e)(2), struck out “1973e,” after “1973c.”

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 109-246, §3(d)(3), substituted “an observer has been assigned” for “an examiner has been appointed”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 109-246, §3(e)(2), struck out “1973e,” after “1973c.”

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 109-246, §3(d)(4), substituted “observers” for “examiners” and substituted “observer” for “examiner” in two places.

1968—Subsecs. (a), (c). Pub. L. 90-284 struck out reference to violation of section 1973i(b) of this title.

§ 1973k. Termination of assignment of observers

(a) In general

The assignment of observers shall terminate in any political subdivision of any State—

(1) with respect to observers appointed pursuant to section 1973f of this title or with respect to examiners certified under subchapters I-A to I-C before July 27, 2006, whenever the Attorney General notifies the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, or whenever the District Court for the District of Columbia determines in an action for declaratory judgment brought by any political subdivision described in subsection (b), that there is no longer reasonable cause to believe that persons will be deprived of or denied the right to vote on account of race or color, or in contravention of the guarantees set forth in section 1973b(f)(2) of this title in such subdivision; and

(2) with respect to observers appointed pursuant to section 1973a(a) of this title, upon order of the authorizing court.

(b) Political subdivision with majority of nonwhite persons registered

A political subdivision referred to in subsection (a)(1) is one with respect to which the Director of the Census has determined that more than 50 per centum of the nonwhite persons of voting age residing therein are registered to vote.

(c) Petition for termination

A political subdivision may petition the Attorney General for a termination under subsection (a)(1).

(Pub. L. 89-110, title I, §13, Aug. 6, 1965, 79 Stat. 444; renumbered title I, Pub. L. 91-285, §2, June 22, 1970, 84 Stat. 314; amended Pub. L. 94-73, title II, §206, Aug. 6, 1975, 89 Stat. 402; Pub. L. 109-246, §3(b), July 27, 2006, 120 Stat. 579; Pub. L. 110-258, §2, July 1, 2008, 122 Stat. 2428.)

AMENDMENTS

2008—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 110-258 made technical amendment to reference in original act which appears in text as reference to July 27, 2006.

2006—Pub. L. 109-246 amended section generally. Prior to amendment, section related to termination of listing procedures, basis for termination, and survey or census by the Director of the Census.

1975—Pub. L. 94-73 substituted “on account of race or color, or in contravention of the guarantees set forth in section 1973b(f)(2) of this title” for “on account of race or color”.

§ 1973l. Enforcement proceedings

(a) Criminal contempt

All cases of criminal contempt arising under the provisions of subchapters I-A to I-C of this chapter shall be governed by section 1995 of this title.

(b) Jurisdiction of courts for declaratory judgment, restraining orders, or temporary or permanent injunction

No court other than the District Court for the District of Columbia shall have jurisdiction to issue any declaratory judgment pursuant to section 1973b or 1973c of this title or any restraining order or temporary or permanent injunction against the execution or enforcement of any provision of subchapters I-A to I-C of this chapter or any action of any Federal officer or employee pursuant hereto.

(c) Definitions

(1) The terms “vote” or “voting” shall include all action necessary to make a vote effective in any primary, special, or general election, including, but not limited to, registration, listing pursuant to this subchapter, or other action required by law prerequisite to voting, casting a ballot, and having such ballot counted properly and included in the appropriate totals of votes cast with respect to candidates for public or party office and propositions for which votes are received in an election.

(2) The term “political subdivision” shall mean any county or parish, except that where registration for voting is not conducted under the supervision of a county or parish, the term shall include any other subdivision of a State which conducts registration for voting.

(3) The term “language minorities” or “language minority group” means persons who are American Indian, Asian American, Alaskan Natives or of Spanish heritage.

(d) Subpenas

In any action for a declaratory judgment brought pursuant to section 1973b or 1973c of this title, subpenas for witnesses who are required to attend the District Court for the District of Columbia may be served in any judicial district of the United States: *Provided*, That no writ of subpoena shall issue for witnesses without the District of Columbia at a greater distance than one hundred miles from the place of holding court

without the permission of the District Court for the District of Columbia being first had upon proper application and cause shown.

(e) Attorney’s fees

In any action or proceeding to enforce the voting guarantees of the fourteenth or fifteenth amendment, the court, in its discretion, may allow the prevailing party, other than the United States, a reasonable attorney’s fee, reasonable expert fees, and other reasonable litigation expenses as part of the costs.

(Pub. L. 89-110, title I, §14, Aug. 6, 1965, 79 Stat. 445; renumbered title I, Pub. L. 91-285, §2, June 22, 1970, 84 Stat. 314; amended Pub. L. 94-73, title II, §207, title IV, §402, Aug. 6, 1975, 89 Stat. 402, 404; Pub. L. 109-246, §§3(e)(3), 6, July 27, 2006, 120 Stat. 580, 581.)

AMENDMENTS

2006—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 109-246, §3(e)(3), struck out “or a court of appeals in any proceeding under section 1973g of this title” after “District of Columbia”.

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 109-246, §6, inserted “, reasonable expert fees, and other reasonable litigation expenses” after “reasonable attorney’s fee”.

1975—Subsec. (c)(3). Pub. L. 94-73, §207, added par. (3). Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 94-73, §402, added subsec. (e).

§ 1973m. Omitted

CODIFICATION

Section, Pub. L. 89-110, title I, §16, Aug. 6, 1965, 79 Stat. 445; renumbered title I, Pub. L. 91-285, §2, June 22, 1970, 84 Stat. 314, authorized Attorney General and Secretary of Defense, jointly, to make a study to determine whether laws or practices of any State or States impose preconditions to voting resulting in discrimination against Armed Forces personnel seeking to vote and to make a report to Congress not later than June 30, 1966, with the results of such study and recommendations for legislation.

§ 1973n. Impairment of voting rights of persons holding current registration

Nothing in subchapters I-A to I-C of this chapter shall be construed to deny, impair, or otherwise adversely affect the right to vote of any person registered to vote under the law of any State or political subdivision.

(Pub. L. 89-110, title I, §17, Aug. 6, 1965, 79 Stat. 446; renumbered title I, Pub. L. 91-285, §2, June 22, 1970, 84 Stat. 314.)

§ 1973o. Authorization of appropriations

There are hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out the provisions of subchapters I-A to I-C of this chapter.

(Pub. L. 89-110, title I, §18, Aug. 6, 1965, 79 Stat. 446; renumbered title I, Pub. L. 91-285, §2, June 22, 1970, 84 Stat. 314.)

§ 1973p. Separability

If any provision of subchapters I-A to I-C of this chapter or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, the remainder of subchapters I-A to I-C of this chapter and the application of the provision to other persons not similarly situated or to other circumstances shall not be affected thereby.