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October 13, 2015

The Honorable Robert Bentley
Governor of Alabama
State Capitol
600 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Dear Governor Bentley:

On behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization, I write to express our organization's deep concern related to the closing of 31 driver's license offices in historically under-served areas with high proportions of poor and minority citizens. In light of the Alabama's strict policies requiring a photo ID to vote, these closures give rise to civil rights concerns and LULAC strongly urges your administration to move forward with your proposal to use a bridge loan from the emergency fund to staff and maintain those offices.

As you may know, the state of Alabama requires government-issued photo IDs at the ballot box. The shuttering of 31 offices in counties where African Americans, and other minorities, make up more than 75 percent of registered voters, is reminiscent of the Jim Crow era policies of the past that sought to disenfranchise minority voters. According to a 2012 Brennan Center report, many of these offices had already been operating on a reduced schedule compared to other offices across the state, and shutting them down completely at a time when strict voter ID requirements are being enforced, is step in the wrong direction.

As a civil rights organization, LULAC has fought against voter ID legislation in other states and recently won a key case in the state of Texas. These voter ID laws present a significant challenge to underserved populations and limits their ability to access the ballot box. Alabama should not regress to the policies of its Jim Crow era. LULAC strongly urges you to proceed with your proposal to use a bridge loan from the emergency fund to staff and maintain the 31 offices that were recently shuttered in key minority communities.

For more information, or should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Luis Torres, LULAC National Director of Policy, by email at latorres@lulac.org or by phone at 202-833-6130.

Sincerely,

Roger C. Rocha, Jr.
LULAC National President