REFERENCE TITLE: state voting rights act

State of Arizona Senate Fifty-seventh Legislature First Regular Session 2025

## **SB 1193**

Introduced by Senators Ortiz: Alston, Bravo, Gabaldón, Kuby, Sundareshan; Representatives Garcia, Sandoval

### AN ACT

AMENDING TITLE 16, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES, BY ADDING CHAPTER 9; RELATING TO ELECTIONS AND ELECTORS.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

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 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

Section 1. Title 16, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended by adding chapter 9, to read:

CHAPTER 9

ARIZONA STATE VOTING RIGHTS ACT ARTICLE 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

16-1201. Definitions

IN THIS CHAPTER, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

- 1. "COVERED POLITICAL SUBDIVISION" MEANS A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION THAT THE SECRETARY OF STATE DETERMINES, BASED ON THE MOST RECENT UNITED STATES DECENNIAL CENSUS, MEETS ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:
- (a) MORE THAN TWO PERCENT OF THE CITIZENS OF VOTING AGE OF THE POLITICAL SUBDIVISION ARE MEMBERS OF A SINGLE LANGUAGE MINORITY AND SPEAK ENGLISH "LESS THAN VERY WELL".
- (b) MORE THAN FOUR THOUSAND OF THE CITIZENS OF VOTING AGE OF THE POLITICAL SUBDIVISION ARE MEMBERS OF A SINGLE LANGUAGE MINORITY AND SPEAK ENGLISH "LESS THAN VERY WELL".
- (c) IN THE CASE OF A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION THAT CONTAINS ALL OR ANY PART OF A TRIBAL NATION, MORE THAN TWO PERCENT OF THE TRIBAL MEMBERS OF VOTING AGE WITHIN THE TRIBAL NATION ARE MEMBERS OF A SINGLE LANGUAGE MINORITY AND SPEAK ENGLISH "LESS THAN VERY WELL".
- (d) THE ILLITERACY RATE OF A SINGLE LANGUAGE MINORITY GROUP IS HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL ILLITERACY RATE.
- 2. "POLITICAL SUBDIVISION" MEANS THIS STATE OR ANY COUNTY, CITY, TOWN, SCHOOL DISTRICT OR OTHER DISTRICT ORGANIZED PURSUANT TO STATE LAW.
- 3. "PROTECTED CLASS" MEANS A CLASS OF VOTERS IDENTIFIED IN SECTION 16-1202.
- 4. "REPRESENTATIONAL PARTICIPATION" MEANS THE RIGHT FOR ALL PERSONS LIVING IN THIS STATE OR A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION TO BE ABLE TO INFLUENCE ELECTED OFFICIALS AND BE INCLUDED IN THE POPULATION BASIS FOR ELECTED REPRESENTATION, REGARDLESS OF ABILITY TO CAST A BALLOT FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS.
  - 5. "UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCE":
- (a) MEANS AN ABRUPT EVENT THAT AFFECTS AN ELECTION AND THAT WAS NEITHER CREATED NOR DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY CAUSED BY THIS STATE OR ANY POLITICAL SUBDIVISION.
  - (b) DOES NOT INCLUDE MONETARY CONCERNS AND CONCERNS OF VOTER FRAUD. 16-1202. <u>Voters' rights</u>
- A. THE RIGHT TO VOTE IS GUARANTEED TO ALL CITIZENS OF THIS STATE. THE RIGHT TO VOTE MAY NOT BE DENIED REGARDLESS OF RACE, INCOME LEVEL, GENDER, DISABILITY, NATIONAL ORIGIN, LANGUAGE ABILITY, AGE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR RELIGION.
- B. THE RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION IS GUARANTEED TO ALL PERSONS IN THIS STATE, AND ALL PERSONS WITHIN ANY POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OR SPECIAL DISTRICT WITHIN THIS STATE HAVE THE RIGHT TO EQUAL POLITICAL

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 REPRESENTATION. THE RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION MAY NOT BE DENIED REGARDLESS OF AGE, CITIZENSHIP STATUS, RACE, INCOME LEVEL, GENDER, DISABILITY, NATIONAL ORIGIN, LANGUAGE ABILITY, STATUS AS A PROPERTY OWNER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR RELIGION.

- C. ALL VOTERS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF RACIAL, ETHNIC AND LANGUAGE-MINORITY GROUPS SHALL HAVE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESSES AS ALL OTHER VOTERS IN THIS STATE, AND ESPECIALLY TO EXERCISE THE ELECTIVE FRANCHISE.
- D. A METHOD OF ELECTING THE GOVERNING BODY OF ANY POLITICAL SUBDIVISION MAY NOT BE IMPOSED OR APPLIED IN A MANNER THAT IMPAIRS THE ABILITY OF A PROTECTED CLASS OR CLASSES TO HAVE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO ELECT CANDIDATES OF THEIR CHOICE AS THE RESULT OF THE DILUTION OR ABRIDGMENT OF THE RIGHTS OF VOTERS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF A PROTECTED CLASS OR CLASSES.

### 16-1203. <u>Standing</u>

- A. ANY MEMBER OF A PROTECTED CLASS WHO RESIDES IN A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION WHERE A VIOLATION OF THIS CHAPTER IS ALLEGED, AN ORGANIZATION WHOSE MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES OR IS LIKELY TO INCLUDE A MEMBER OF A PROTECTED CLASS WHO RESIDES IN A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION WHERE A VIOLATION OF THIS CHAPTER IS ALLEGED OR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL MAY BRING A CIVIL ACTION TO ENFORCE THIS CHAPTER.
- B. ANY PERSON WHO RESIDES IN A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION WHERE A VIOLATION OF THE RIGHT TO REPRESENTATIONAL PARTICIPATION IS ALLEGED, AN ORGANIZATION WHOSE MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES OR IS LIKELY TO INCLUDE A MEMBER OF A PROTECTED CLASS WHO RESIDES IN A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION WHERE A VIOLATION OF THIS CHAPTER IS ALLEGED OR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL MAY BRING A CIVIL ACTION TO ENFORCE THIS CHAPTER.

# 16-1204. <u>Voting materials in minority languages: declaratory judgment</u>

- A. FOLLOWING EACH UNITED STATES DECENNIAL CENSUS, THE SECRETARY OF STATE SHALL CALCULATE WHICH POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS ARE COVERED POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS FOR THE PURPOSES OF ADMINISTERING ELECTIONS.
  - B. COVERED POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS SHALL:
- 1. PROVIDE VOTING MATERIALS IN THE COVERED LANGUAGE OF AN EQUAL QUALITY TO THE CORRESPONDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE MATERIALS, INCLUDING REGISTRATION OR VOTING NOTICES, FORMS, INSTRUCTIONS, ASSISTANCE OR OTHER MATERIALS OR INFORMATION RELATING TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, INCLUDING BALLOTS AND VOTING SYSTEMS.
- 2. WHENEVER A COVERED POLITICAL SUBDIVISION PROVIDES ANY REGISTRATION OR VOTING NOTICES, FORMS, INSTRUCTIONS, ASSISTANCE OR OTHER MATERIALS OR INFORMATION RELATING TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, INCLUDING BALLOTS, IN A COVERED POLITICAL SUBDIVISION, THE COVERED POLITICAL SUBDIVISION SHALL PROVIDE THEM IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE APPLICABLE MINORITY GROUP AS WELL AS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, EXCEPT THAT IF THE LANGUAGE OF THE APPLICABLE MINORITY GROUP IS ORAL OR UNWRITTEN OR, IN THE CASE OF SOME

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 TRIBAL NATIONS, IF THE PREDOMINANT LANGUAGE IS HISTORICALLY UNWRITTEN, THE COVERED POLITICAL SUBDIVISION IS REQUIRED ONLY TO FURNISH ORAL INSTRUCTIONS, ASSISTANCE OR OTHER INFORMATION RELATING TO REGISTRATION AND VOTING.

- 3. ENSURE THAT FOR EACH SINGLE LANGUAGE MINORITY THERE IS AT LEAST ONE ELECTION OFFICIAL WHO SERVES AT EACH POLLING PLACE IN THE COVERED POLITICAL SUBDIVISION WHO SPEAKS THAT SINGLE LANGUAGE MINORITY'S LANGUAGE FLUENTLY.
- C. A COVERED POLITICAL SUBDIVISION THAT SEEKS TO PROVIDE ENGLISH-ONLY REGISTRATION OR VOTING MATERIALS OR INFORMATION, INCLUDING BALLOTS, MAY FILE AN ACTION AGAINST THE STATE FOR DECLARATORY RELIEF. THE COURT SHALL ENTER A DECLARATORY JUDGMENT IF IT FINDS THAT THE DETERMINATION OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE WAS UNREASONABLE OR AN ABUSE OF DISCRETION.
  - 16-1205. Rights of action; language minority voting materials
- A. A COVERED POLITICAL SUBDIVISION VIOLATES THE RIGHT TO VOTE IF IT FAILS TO PROVIDE ANY OR ALL OF THE VOTING MATERIALS IN COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 16-1204 AND DOES NOT CURE THIS FAILURE WITHIN THREE HOURS AFTER RECEIVING WRITTEN NOTICE OF THE FAILURE.
- B. A COVERED POLITICAL SUBDIVISION COMMITS A SEPARATE VIOLATION OF THE RIGHT TO VOTE IF IT FAILS TO PROVIDE AT LEAST ONE ELECTION OFFICIAL WHO SERVES AT EACH POLLING PLACE IN THE COVERED POLITICAL SUBDIVISION WHO SPEAKS THAT SINGLE LANGUAGE MINORITY'S LANGUAGE FLUENTLY PURSUANT TO SECTION 16-1204 AND DOES NOT CURE THIS FAILURE AS FOLLOWS:
- 1. WITHIN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS AFTER RECEIVING WRITTEN NOTICE OF THE FAILURE FROM A PLAINTIFF SEEKING TO ENFORCE SECTION 16-1204 IN ADVANCE OF ANY ELECTION.
- 2. WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AFTER RECEIVING WRITTEN NOTICE OF THE FAILURE FROM A PLAINTIFF SEEKING TO ENFORCE SECTION 16-1204 ON ANY DAY IN WHICH VOTING OCCURS.
- 3. WITHIN ONE HOUR AFTER RECEIVING WRITTEN NOTICE OF THE FAILURE FROM A PLAINTIFF SEEKING TO ENFORCE SECTION 16-1204 ON THE LAST DAY IN WHICH VOTING OCCURS.
- C. IN ADDITION TO ANY FEES AND COSTS OWED UNDER SECTION 16-1210, A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION AGAINST WHOM ANY PARTY PREVAILS ON A CLAIM TO ENFORCE SECTION 16-1204 MUST PAY A PENALTY OF \$5,000 PER AFFECTED VOTER, UP TO \$250,000. THIS PENALTY IS WITHOUT REGARD TO ANY FINDING OF A DEFENDANT'S INTENT TO VIOLATE SECTION 16-1204. IF THE COURT FINDS A DEFENDANT INTENTIONALLY VIOLATED SECTION 16-1206, THE COURT MAY ENTER A PENALTY AGAINST THAT DEFENDANT.
  - 16-1206. Rights of action: violation of right to vote
- A. THE RIGHT TO VOTE IS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT. THE STATE MAY NOT DENY, ABRIDGE OR RESTRICT A CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE.
- B. ANY STATE ACTION THAT HAS THE IMPACT OF DENYING OR ABRIDGING A CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE AND THAT IS NOT THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE MEANS OF

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 ADVANCING A COMPELLING GOVERNMENT INTEREST IS A VIOLATION OF A CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE UNDER THIS CHAPTER.

C. A PERSON WHOSE RIGHT TO VOTE HAS BEEN DENIED OR RESTRICTED BY THIS STATE, ITS POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS, ANY PRIVATE OR PUBLIC ENTITY OR A PRIVATE PERSON IN VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION MAY ASSERT THAT VIOLATION AS A CLAIM UNDER THIS CHAPTER.

16-1207. Rights of action; voter suppression; definition

- A. THIS STATE OR A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION VIOLATES THE RIGHT TO VOTE IF, BASED ON THE TOTALITY OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES, MEMBERS OF A PROTECTED CLASS HAVE LESS OPPORTUNITY THAN OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ELECTORATE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS OR TO ELECT CANDIDATES OR ELECTORAL CHOICES PREFERRED BY MEMBERS OF THE PROTECTED CLASS.
- B. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, "TOTALITY OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES" INCLUDES CIRCUMSTANCES THE EXTENT TO WHICH MEMBERS OF A PROTECTED CLASS HAVE BEEN ELECTED TO OFFICE IN THIS STATE OR ANY POLITICAL SUBDIVISION AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH MEMBERS OF A PROTECTED CLASS IN THIS STATE OR ANY POLITICAL SUBDIVISION VOTE AT LOWER RATES THAN OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ELECTORATE.

16-1208. Rights of action: political participation

- A. THE RIGHT TO POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT. THIS STATE OR A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION MAY NOT DENY, ABRIDGE OR RESTRICT THE RIGHT TO EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF A PERSON WHO RESIDES IN THE POLITICAL SUBDIVISION.
- B. A COURT MAY ADOPT ONLY A REMEDY FOR A VIOLATION OF SUBSECTION A OF THIS SECTION THAT WILL NOT DIMINISH THE POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF ALL PERSONS IN THE CHALLENGED BODY. THE COURT SHALL CONSIDER PROPOSED REMEDIES BY ANY PARTIES AND INTERESTED NONPARTIES AND SHALL NOT PROVIDE DEFERENCE OR PRIORITY TO A PROPOSED REMEDY BECAUSE IT IS PROPOSED BY THE POLITICAL SUBDIVISION. THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES THE COURT WITH AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT REMEDIES NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF STATE LAW.

16-1209. <u>Election law changes; presumption; rebuttal</u>

- A. A VOTER'S RIGHT TO VOTE CANNOT BE ABRIDGED OR DENIED THROUGH AN ELECTION LAW, SCHEME, RULE OR ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGE.
- B. THIS STATE OR A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION VIOLATES THIS SECTION IF A REGULATION, SCHEME, DEVISE OR RESTRICTION IS CHANGED OR IMPLEMENTED, OR THE POLLING LOCATION IS MOVED OR CLOSED OR AN ADMINISTRATIVE RULE OR PROCESS RESULTS IN DECREASED VOTER ACCESS DURING THE NINETY-DAY PERIOD BEFORE ANY STATE OR FEDERAL ELECTION.
- C. THERE IS A PRESUMPTION THAT ANY CHANGE THAT MODIFIES, ESTABLISHES OR ABOLISHES A REGULATION, LAW, SCHEME, DEVISE OR RULE WITHIN THE NINETY-DAY PERIOD BEFORE ANY STATE OR FEDERAL ELECTION, INCLUDING THE PLACEMENT AND AVAILABILITY OF POLLING LOCATIONS AND BALLOT DROP BOXES, AND THAT RESULTS IN DECREASED VOTER ACCESS IS IN VIOLATION OF THIS CHAPTER.
- D. THIS STATE OR A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION MAY REBUT THE PRESUMPTION PRESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION C OF THIS SECTION BY OBTAINING A TRIAL COURT

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ORDER THAT IS AFFIRMED BY AN APPELLATE COURT THAT THE CHANGE WAS NECESSARY DUE TO EMERGENCY OR UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES.

### 16-1210. Attorney fees

- A. IN ANY ACTION TO ENFORCE THIS CHAPTER, THE COURT SHALL AWARD A PREVAILING PLAINTIFF, OTHER THAN THIS STATE OR A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION, REASONABLE ATTORNEY FEES AND LITIGATION EXPENSES, INCLUDING EXPERT WITNESS FEES AND EXPENSES AS PART OF THE COSTS.
- B. IF A PLAINTIFF DEMONSTRATES THAT THE PLAINTIFF SUCCEEDED IN ALTERING THE DEFENDANT'S BEHAVIOR TO CORRECT A CLAIMED HARM AT THE TIME THE SUIT FOR INTERIM ATTORNEY FEES IS FILED, THE PLAINTIFF DOES NOT NEED TO ACHIEVE A JUDICIALLY SANCTIONED RELIEF OR FAVORABLE JUDGMENT IN ORDER TO BE THE PREVAILING PLAINTIFF.
- C. A PLAINTIFF WHO HAS PREVAILED ON PART OF THE PLAINTIFF'S CLAIM WHILE THE CASE REMAINS PENDING MAY ALSO SEEK AN AWARD OF INTERIM ATTORNEY FEES FOR SECURING THE INTERIM RELIEF. THE CLAIM SUPPORTING THE PLAINTIFF'S REQUEST FOR INTERIM ATTORNEY FEES NEED NOT BE A CENTRAL CLAIM OF THE CASE.
- D. A PREVAILING DEFENDANT MAY NOT RECOVER ANY COSTS, UNLESS THE COURT FINDS THE ACTION TO BE FRIVOLOUS, UNREASONABLE OR WITHOUT FOUNDATION.

### 16-1211. Legal procedures

- A. ANY ACTION COMMENCED UNDER THIS CHAPTER IS NOT RENDERED MOOT OR OTHERWISE AFFECTED BY THE CONCLUSION OF AN ELECTION CYCLE DURING WHICH THE ACTION WAS BROUGHT IF THE CASE IS CAPABLE OF REPETITION.
- B. A COURT MAY EXERCISE JURISDICTION OVER A CHALLENGE TO THE ELECTORAL FRANCHISE IF:
- 1. THE CHALLENGED ACTION IS TOO SHORT IN ITS DURATION TO BE FULLY LITIGATED BEFORE ITS CESSATION OR EXPIRATION.
- 2. THERE IS A REASONABLE EXPECTATION THAT THE SAME COMPLAINING PARTY WOULD BE SUBJECTED TO THE SAME ACTION AGAIN.
- C. THE COURT SHALL HEAR THE CASE AT THE EARLIEST PRACTICABLE DATE AND SHALL CAUSE THE CASE TO BE IN EVERY WAY EXPEDITED, INCLUDING THROUGH GRANTING THE CASE AUTOMATIC CALENDAR PREFERENCE.
- D. THE PLAINTIFF'S CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO THE SECRECY OF THE PLAINTIFF'S VOTE IS PRESERVED AND IS NOT WAIVED BY THE FILING OF AN ACTION PURSUANT TO THIS CHAPTER. THE FILING IS NOT SUBJECT TO DISCOVERY OR DISCLOSURE.
- E. IN SEEKING A TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER OR A PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION, A PLAINTIFF SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED TO POST A BOND GREATER THAN \$10 OR ANY OTHER ADDITIONAL SECURITY IN ORDER TO SECURE EQUITABLE RELIEF.
- F. AN ACTION FILED PURSUANT TO THIS CHAPTER DOES NOT NEED TO BE FILED AS A CLASS ACTION. MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT CLASSES MAY FILE AN ACTION JOINTLY PURSUANT TO THIS CHAPTER IF THEY DEMONSTRATE THAT THE COMBINED VOTING PREFERENCES OF THE MULTIPLE PROTECTED CLASSES ARE POLARIZED AGAINST

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THE REST OF THE ELECTORATE. THE COURT MAY GRANT RELIEF TO THE BENEFIT OF THE FULL CLASS WITHOUT REGARD TO WHETHER IT IS FILED AS A CLASS ACTION.

16-1212. <u>Remedies</u>

A. ON A FINDING OF A VIOLATION OF THIS CHAPTER, THE COURT SHALL IMPLEMENT APPROPRIATE REMEDIES THAT ARE TAILORED TO REMEDY THE VIOLATION IF NOT OTHERWISE PROHIBITED BY THE ARIZONA CONSTITUTION. REMEDIES MAY INCLUDE:

- 1. PROVIDING ADDITIONAL VOTING HOURS OR DAYS.
- 2. PROVIDING ADDITIONAL POLLING LOCATIONS.
- 3. PROVIDING ADDITIONAL MEANS OF VOTING.
- 4. REQUIRING EXPANDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOTER REGISTRATION.
- 5. REQUIRING ADDITIONAL VOTER EDUCATION.
- 6. MODIFYING THE ELECTION CALENDAR.
- 7. RESTORING OR ADDING PERSONS TO REGISTRATION LISTS.
- B. THE COURT SHALL ADOPT ONLY A REMEDY THAT WILL NOT DIMINISH THE ABILITY OF MINORITY GROUPS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS AND TO ELECT THEIR PREFERRED CANDIDATES TO OFFICE. THE COURT SHALL CONSIDER PROPOSED REMEDIES BY ANY PARTIES AND INTERESTED NONPARTIES AND SHALL NOT PROVIDE DEFERENCE OR PRIORITY TO A PROPOSED REMEDY BECAUSE IT IS PROPOSED BY THE POLITICAL SUBDIVISION. THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES THE COURT WITH AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT REMEDIES NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF STATE LAW.
- C. THE COURT SHALL PROVIDE THIS STATE OR THE POLITICAL SUBDIVISION AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROPOSE AN APPROPRIATE REMEDY TAILORED TO THE NEEDS OF THE JURISDICTION IF THE ELECTION IS MORE THAN NINETY DAYS IN THE FUTURE. IF THE PROPOSED REMEDY CAN DEMONSTRABLY RESOLVE THE VIOLATION, THE COURT SHALL ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL AS THE REMEDY. IF THE PROPOSED REMEDY IS INADEQUATE OR THE ELECTION WILL OCCUR WITHIN NINETY DAYS, THE COURT SHALL USE ITS DISCRETION TO FASHION AND ORDER AN APPROPRIATE REMEDY FOR THE VIOLATION.

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