

SETON HALL | LAW

Seton Hall Legislative Journal Symposium Ballots and Democracy: A New Scholarly Agenda Friday, February 24, 2023



Ryan P. Haygood

President and CEO

New Jersey Institute for Social Justice

Ryan P. Haygood is a nationally respected civil rights lawyer. As President and CEO of the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, he leads a majority people of color staff of racial justice advocates whose cutting-edge work – powered by grassroots organizing, research, writing, policy and legislative advocacy, and litigation – seeks to build reparative systems that create wealth, justice and power for Black, Latina/Latino and other people of color in New Jersey. Prior to leading the Institute, Haygood served as Deputy Director of Litigation at the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), where he worked for more than a decade. At LDF, Ryan litigated some of the most important civil rights cases of our time. In two of those cases, he defended a core provision of the Voting Rights Act, widely regarded as one of the nation’s greatest pieces of civil rights legislation, before the United States Supreme Court. Ryan also led a successful challenge to Texas’s racially discriminatory photo ID law, under which a voter could present a concealed-handgun license as a form of identification to vote at the polls but not a student ID. In the first ruling of its kind, a federal district court struck down Texas’s photo ID law as intentionally racially discriminatory, a violation of the Voting Rights Act and an unconstitutional poll tax. A passionate advocate, Ryan speaks and writes regularly on issues concerning race, law, social justice, democracy and power. Ryan received his J.D. from the University of Colorado School of Law and B.A. in American History and Political Science cum laude from Colorado College, where he was nominated for the Rhodes scholarship and earned academic and athletic All-American and hall of fame honors as a football player.