

Protect your voting rights



What is a “voting restriction”?

- A “voting restriction” or a “restrictive voting law” is a law that makes it more difficult for people to vote. Typically, voting rights advocates who are against such laws are the ones who use this language. Those who support the types of laws that are at issue in the fight over voting rights would be more likely to simply call these “election laws.”



History of Voter Suppression

- Our nation's "founding fathers" wrote about a fair and just democracy for all, but this ideal was not realized in the early stages of the American experiment. Only land-owning white men were able to vote. As time passed, laws were modified to allow states to make their own election rules, allowing less privileged people like farmers and commoners the ability to vote, but it did not extend voting rights to all. In 1776, New Jersey gave voting rights to all who lived in the state, but then quickly passed a law to disenfranchise all women and Black men. Native Americans, African Americans, women, and immigrants were barred from voting, and places like Maryland also banned Jewish people from voting.



15th amendment

- The ensured that people could not be denied the right to vote because of their race, color or previous condition of servitude, but it also enabled states to oversee elections as they saw fit. Shortly after the Civil War, Mississippi's Democrats were appalled when two Black men became members of the Senate. They then initiated a campaign of intimidation at the polls that succeeded in restoring white Democrats to power in Mississippi by 1881. Mississippi became one of the first states to put forth a "grandfather clause" that permitted registering anyone whose grandfather was qualified to vote before the Civil War." This voter-suppression tactic cut the percentage of Black men eligible to vote from over 90% to less than 6% in 1892. Women still could not vote.



More suppression

- Many other states implemented such tactics as poll taxes, literacy tests, and English-language requirements to deliberately reduce voting among African Americans, immigrants, and low-income populations. These tactics became known as Jim Crow Laws. Efforts like the one in Mississippi and other southern states lasted for almost a century.



More Suppression

- Women were afforded the right to vote by the 19th amendment to the Constitution in 1920. In practice, though, only white women were able to take advantage of this provision. The 1950s and 60s were a time of civil unrest in the U.S. as the civil rights, anti-war, and feminist movements gained prominence. As the civil rights movement grew, activists sought equality for African Americans, and voting rights were a major focus. Many states used poll taxes to keep marginalized people from voting. Others enacted grandfather clauses that reinstated the right to vote for many white people who had previously been allowed to vote but were disallowed because they could not pay poll taxes. The [24th Amendment](#) outlawed poll taxes, but while the amendment extended the right to vote to many African Americans, it was not enough.



- Following this pivotal moment in the struggle for voting rights, Congress passed and President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act. The law outlawed the most common voter suppression tactics and created federal oversight of states and localities with histories of voter discrimination. The act gave Black women, Native Americans, and immigrants the legal right to vote. Many thought this marked the end of voter suppression.



Civil Rights

- To voice their discontent with the treatment of African Americans in the U.S., civil rights activists like Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, and John Lewis participated in a peaceful march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama in March 1965. The event was televised, and the world witnessed the cruelty of state troopers who attacked the peaceful protestors with batons, tear gas, and whips. Some protestors, including Lewis, were beaten until they bled. Others ran for their lives.



- The years following the Voting Rights Act saw many changes. In the context of the Vietnam War, young people believed if they could be drafted to fight, they should be able to vote. The [26th Amendment](#) allowed anyone over 18 years old to vote.



- In recent years, however, many state legislatures have introduced an array of voter suppression tactics making it more difficult for many people to cast a vote.



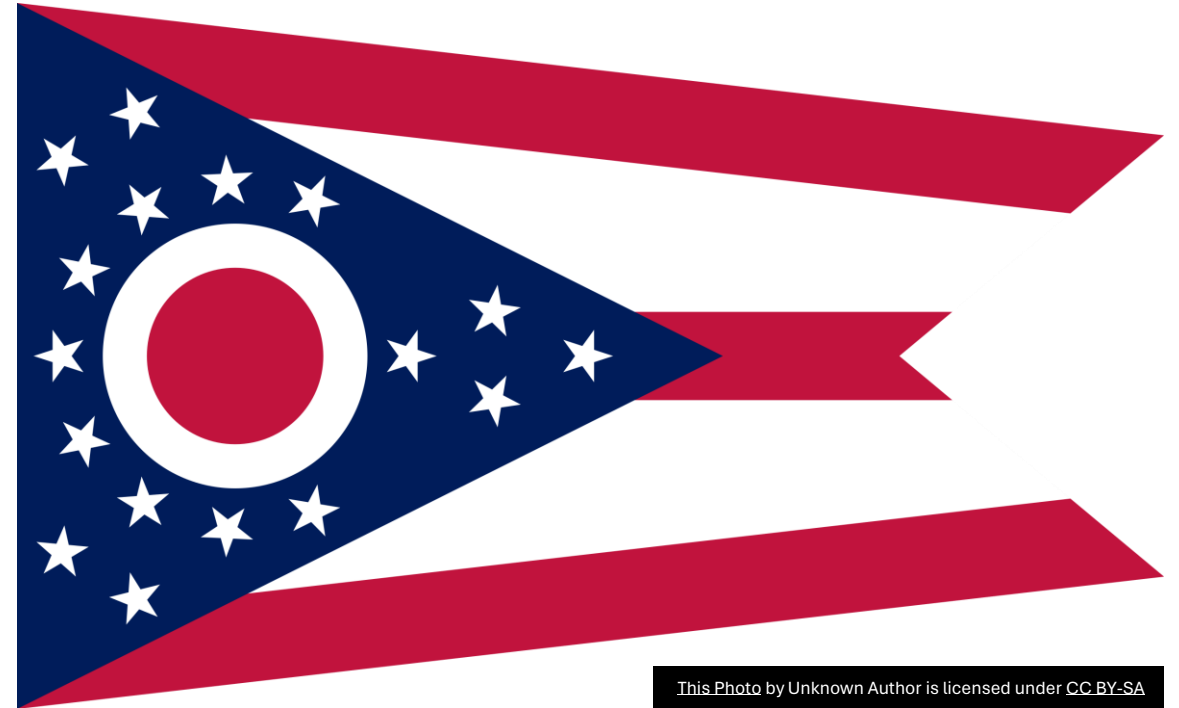
Restrictive Voting Laws Enacted in 2023

- Arkansas AR H.B. 1411 Makes it more difficult for voters to acquire a mail ballot
- Florida FL S.B. 7050 Imposes new requirements on get-out-the-vote groups and increases financial penalties for human error
- Idaho ID H.B. 124 Removes student IDs as an allowable form of ID for voting
- ID H.B. 340 Tightens ID and proof of residence requirements for registering to vote
- Indiana IN H.B. 1334 Imposes stricter ID requirements for acquiring a mail ballot and prohibits the sending of unsolicited mail ballot applications
- Kansas KS S.B. 106 Prohibits officials from providing mail ballots to voters who have not submitted an application
- Mississippi MS H.B. 1310 Requires a voter purge without adequate safeguards for eligible voters
- MS S.B. 2358 Makes it a crime in most instances to assist another voter in returning a mail ballot
- Nebraska NE L.B. 514 Imposes new photo ID requirements for in-person and absentee voting
- New Mexico NM S.B. 180 Shortens the mail ballot application deadline and makes it harder to get a replacement mail ballot
- North Carolina NC S.B. 747 Omnibus law that shortens the mail ballot return window, bans drop boxes, and restricts same-day registration
- North Dakota ND H.B. 1431 Requires voters who present non-driver ID to also show proof of citizenship
- South Dakota SD H.B. 1165 Bans ballot drop boxes and makes it harder for voters to acquire a mail ballot
- Texas TX S.B. 924 Allows some counties to consolidate polling places
- Utah UT S.B. 17 Adds new ground for voter challenges and enhances proof of residence requirements for certain voters
- Wyoming WY H.B. 279 Creates an ID requirement for people applying in-person for a mail ballot
- WY S.F. 153 Shortens the mail ballot distribution window from 45 to 28 days before Election Day

Ohio

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- Since 1994, Ohio has had a policy of purging infrequent voters from the rolls. In April 2016, a lawsuit was filed, challenging this policy on the grounds that it violated the [National Voter Registration Act of 1993](#) (NVRA)^[123] and the [Help America Vote Act of 2002](#).^[124] In June, the federal district court ruled for the plaintiffs, and entered a preliminary injunction applicable only to the November 2016 election. The preliminary injunction was upheld in September by the Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. Had it not been upheld, thousands of voters would have been purged from the rolls just a few weeks before the election.^[123]
- On June 11, 2018, the Supreme Court ruled that Ohio could continue its voting rolls purging thus reversing the 2016 Supreme Court ruling. The *New York Times* article "Supreme Court Upholds Purge of Ohio Voters", writes that for the state of Ohio, if a voter does not vote in a federal election, they will be sent a notice, if they do not respond to the notice and do not vote in the next four years, they will be removed from the voter rolls.^[125] Other states with the "Use it or lost it" type policy vary in notice response times and how many elections can be "missed." According to the *Times* article, Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. who was writing on behalf of the majority, penned that this move is to encourage states to "clean up their voting rolls" that may contain invalid and/or inaccurate voter registrations.^[125] In the *USA Today* article, "Supreme Court Says States Can Remove Voters Who Skip Elections, ignore warnings", Justice Stephen Breyer wrote a counter statement, referencing past forms of voter suppression and stating the ruling "erects needless hurdles to voting of the kind Congress sought to eliminate."^[126]



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VOTE

ID REQUIRED

Go To Handout # 1 select what you think may be voter restriction in Ohio

Mandating the use of photo IDs, passports, or driver's licenses to vote, and limiting counties to one ballot drop box.

The law also mandated citizenship status on IDs and excludes county-issued veterans' identification and college IDs from the list one can use to vote.

The day before Election Day (Monday) has been eliminated as an Early In-Person voting day

voter can no longer provide the last four digits of their SSN as a valid form of ID when casting a provisional ballot. A voter must show a photo ID to meet the threshold of providing a valid form of ID.

New law specifies a Drop Box can only be located on board property, and only one Drop Box is permitted per county.

A board of elections must permit an elector with a disability who is **physically unable to enter a polling place** to vote in the elector's vehicle or at the door of the polling place with the assistance of a bipartisan team of election offic