

DOES YOUR VOTE COUNT?

ENSURING ELECTION INTEGRITY
AND MAKING SURE EVERY VOTE COUNTS

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Ensuring Election Integrity and Making Sure Every Vote Counts.

Read on for shocking stories of voter fraud—and what you can do to stop it.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF FAIR ELECTIONS

Preserving the great experiment that is the American Republic is dependent upon free and fair elections. Whether you are selecting a city councilor or the President, every American must be able to trust the process and the result, or the democratic system breaks down. Election integrity is an essential part of free and fair elections. As an eligible citizen, you must be guaranteed the right to vote—and it must be guaranteed that your vote is not stolen or diluted by thieves and fraudsters. “Every vote that is fraudulently manufactured disenfranchises the legitimate voter and makes a mockery of our political process.”¹

But why would someone steal your vote? Elections are avenues to political power and prestige. So long as they are, there will be those who would rather steal a vote than leave their ambitions vulnerable to your opinions. Chicago saw this firsthand in 1982, when 100,000 fraudulent ballots were cast in a massive effort to swing an election. Some who oppose measures intended to prevent election fraud claim there is not enough fraud to justify such election integrity efforts, but as the National Commission on Federal Election Reform said, the problem “is not the magnitude of voter fraud. In close or disputed elections, and there are many, a small amount of fraud could make the margin of difference.”²

The background is a dark, blurred image of a voting booth. On the left, there is a sign featuring the American flag and the word "VOTE" in large, bold, capital letters. The overall scene is dimly lit, emphasizing the text in the foreground.

**Election integrity
is an essential
part of free and
fair elections.**

HOW LONG HAS VOTER FRAUD BEEN A PROBLEM?

The U.S. Supreme Court has said that “flagrant examples” of voter fraud “have been documented throughout this Nation’s history by respected historians and journalists.” The instances of such fraud uncovered over the years “demonstrate that not only is the risk of voter fraud real but that it could affect the outcome of a close election.”³

Coordinated attempts to commandeer election results are not a modern invention. Instances have been documented in the United States dating as far back as the early 19th century. New York City’s infamous political organization, Tammany Hall, was synonymous with election fraud—in one election in 1844 there were 55,000 votes recorded even though there were only 41,000 eligible voters.⁴ Those early traditions of voter fraud have continued and grown ever more inventive. In 1984, a state grand jury report released in Kings County, New York detailed a 14-year-long successful voter fraud conspiracy in Brooklyn that resulted in thousands of fraudulent votes being cast in New York legislative and congressional elections through impersonation fraud and false registrations.⁵

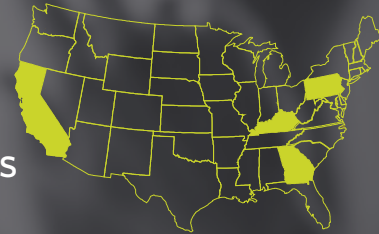


24 million

registrations, nearly 1 in 8, are inaccurate out-of-date, or duplicates

2.8 million

people are registered in 2 or more states



1.8 million

voters are dead

Source: Pew Study ⁶

TYPES OF VOTER FRAUD

There are many different forms of voter and election fraud that can be used to steal votes or change the outcome of an election. These include:

- ◆ **IMPERSONATION FRAUD AT THE POLLS** - Voting in the names of other legitimate voters and voters who have died, moved away, or lost their right to vote because they are felons, but remain registered.
- ◆ **FALSE REGISTRATIONS** - Voting under fraudulent voter registrations that either use a phony name and a real or fake address or claim residence in a particular jurisdiction where the registered voter does not actually live and is not entitled to vote.
- ◆ **DUPLICATE VOTING** - Registering in multiple locations and voting in the same election in more than one jurisdiction or state.
- ◆ **FRAUDULENT USE OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS** - Requesting and voting with absentee ballots without the knowledge of the actual voter; or obtaining the absentee ballot from a voter and either filling it in directly and forging the voter's signature or illegally telling the voter who to vote for on the ballot.
- ◆ **BUYING VOTES** - Paying voters to cast either an in-person or absentee ballot for a particular candidate.
- ◆ **ILLEGAL "ASSISTANCE" AT THE POLLS** - Forcing or intimidating voters—particularly the elderly, disabled, illiterate, and those for whom English is a second language—to vote for particular candidates while supposedly providing them with “assistance.”
- ◆ **INELIGIBLE VOTING** - Illegal registration and voting by individuals who are not U.S. citizens, or are convicted felons, and therefore are not eligible to vote.
- ◆ **ALTERING THE VOTE COUNT** - Changing the actual vote count either in a precinct or at the central location where votes are counted.
- ◆ **BALLOT PETITION FRAUD** - Forging the signatures of registered voters on the ballot petitions that must be filed with election officials in some states for a candidate to be listed on the official ballot.



Impersonation fraud at the polls

False registrations

Duplicate voting

Fraudulent use of absentee ballots

Buying votes

Illegal "assistance" at the polls

Ineligible voting

Altering the vote count

Ballot petition fraud



ALABAMA

FRAUDULENT ABSENTEE BALLOTS

1994 **2010**

ELECTION

ELECTION

In Greene County, Alabama, eleven local politicians, government officials, and campaign activists were convicted of casting hundreds of fraudulent absentee ballots in the 1994 election, changing the outcome of the election in their favor. In 2010, a former circuit clerk in Hale County was convicted of multiple counts of absentee ballot fraud to benefit candidates that included her brother and husband.



ARKANSAS

BUYING VOTES

2011

ELECTION

A state legislator, his father, and two campaign workers were convicted of conspiracy to commit voter fraud in the 2011 elections for bribing absentee voters and destroying ballots.





CALIFORNIA

A 2012 city council election in Vernon, California, in which a candidate won by four votes, was overturned after it was discovered that five registered voters had falsely claimed they were residents of the city when they registered to vote. In 2002, noncitizens testified under oath that they had voted in a mayor's election in Compton, California. A candidate who was elected to the Compton city council was permanently disqualified by a court from holding public office for soliciting noncitizens to register and vote. In 2014, a state senator was convicted of felony counts of voter fraud committed in five elections.

INELIGIBLE VOTING / FALSE REGISTRATIONS

2002
MAYORAL ELECTION

2012
CITY COUNCIL ELECTION

2014
ELECTION



FLORIDA

The 1997 Miami mayoral race was overturned by a court because of thousands of fraudulent absentee ballots. In 2013, the chief of staff of a Florida congressman pleaded guilty to orchestrating a plot involving the submission of hundreds of fraudulent absentee ballot requests in the 2012 primary.

FRAUDULENT ABSENTEE BALLOTS

1997
MAYORAL ELECTION

2012
PRIMARY



GEORGIA

MISCELLANEOUS VOTER FRAUD

1996

SHERIFF'S RACE

In a 1996 election in Dodge County, Georgia, a commission race won by 31 votes and a sheriff's race won by nine votes were overturned by a court because of a vote fraud conspiracy that included vote buying, multiple voting, and votes cast by felons and in the name of deceased voters.



ILLINOIS

MISCELLANEOUS VOTER FRAUD

1982

ELECTION

2004

ELECTION

Sixty-three individuals were convicted of voter fraud in connection with a 1982 scheme in Chicago that included vote buying, impersonation fraud, fictitious voter registrations, phony absentee ballots, and voting by noncitizens; the U.S. Attorney estimated that 100,000 fraudulent ballots had been cast. In the 2004 election, five East St. Louis precinct officials schemed to use city funds to pay voters to vote for Democratic candidates.



INDIANA

In 2004, the Indiana Supreme Court threw out the results of a mayoral race in East Chicago, Indiana because of pervasive absentee ballot fraud. In 2013, four individuals were convicted of ballot petition fraud for forging the signatures of voters that qualified President Barack Obama for the 2008 Democratic primary ballot.

FRAUDULENT ABSENTEE BALLOTS

2004

MAYORAL ELECTION

BALLOT PETITION FRAUD

2008

PRIMARY



KENTUCKY

Eight local politicians and activists in Clay County were convicted of vote buying in 2010 in order to rig election outcomes. Officials have been convicted of similar vote buying conspiracies in Breathitt, Knott, Monroe, Pike, and Clay Counties in the past decade, with some having used public funds to buy votes.

VOTE BUYING

2010

ELECTION





MISSOURI

DUPLICATE VOTING / FALSE REGISTRATIONS

2000

ELECTION

2002

ELECTION

2010

LEGISLATIVE ELECTION

The uncle of a legislative candidate who won an election in 2010 by just one vote pleaded guilty to felony voter fraud for falsely registering in the district when he did not live there. Two residents of Kansas were convicted of voting in both Johnson County, Kansas and Kansas City, Missouri in the 2000 and 2002 elections.



MISSISSIPPI

FRAUDULENT ABSENTEE BALLOTS

2011

ELECTION

A member of the Tunica County NAACP Executive Committee was convicted in 2011 of fraudulently voting in the names of 10 individuals, four of whom were dead.



NEW YORK

A 1984 grand jury report in Kings County detailed a successful 14-year vote fraud conspiracy that resulted in thousands of fraudulent votes cast through impersonation of legitimate voters at the polls and voting under fictitious names. In 2013, undercover agents from the New York City Department of Investigation were able to vote in 61 polling places (out of 63 attempts) using the names of registered voters who were dead, had moved, or were in prison. Four individuals in Troy, New York were convicted of forging absentee ballots in the 2009 primary, with one of them commenting that this type of fraud was commonplace.

IMPERSONATION FRAUD / ABSENTEE BALLOT FRAUD

1968-1982
ELECTIONS

2009
PRIMARY

OHIO

Three paid staff members for an advocacy organization, who were not residents of Ohio, pleaded guilty to illegally registering and voting in the 2008 election. A poll worker was convicted in 2013 of casting multiple ballots in several elections, including in the name of her sister.

IMPERSONATION FRAUD / FALSE REGISTRATIONS

2008
ELECTION

2012
ELECTION



PENNSYLVANIA

FALSE REGISTRATIONS

1976 **2008**
ELECTION ELECTION

In 1979, 23 individuals were convicted of engaging in a voter fraud conspiracy through false voter registrations, including claiming residence in a legislative district in Philadelphia where they did not live. In the 2008 election, four community organizers were convicted of falsifying voter registrations.



TENNESSEE

MISCELLANEOUS VOTER FRAUD

2005
LEGISLATIVE ELECTION

A special legislative election in 2005 that was won by 13 votes was overturned after it was discovered that votes had been cast by individuals who were dead, did not live in the district, or whose registered addresses were vacant lots. Three poll workers were convicted in this scheme to falsify votes.



VIRGINIA

The mayor and 14 co-conspirators were convicted of vote buying and stealing absentee ballots in the 2004 election in Appalachia, Virginia. The mayor was convicted of 243 felony counts. Their nefarious activities involved buying off voters with beer, cigarettes, and pork rinds. In 2013, an individual pleaded guilty to forging ballot petition signatures to qualify Newt Gingrich for the 2012 Republican primary ballot.

BUYING VOTES / BALLOT PETITION FRAUD

2004
ELECTION

2012
PRIMARY ELECTION



WEST VIRGINIA

A county clerk and sheriff were convicted in Lincoln County of voter fraud in the 2010 election for stuffing ballot boxes with fraudulent absentee ballots—a judge overturned the election after throwing out 300 questionable ballots.

FRAUDULENT ABSENTEE BALLOTS

2010
ELECTION

THESE ARE JUST A FEW EXAMPLES OF VOTER FRAUD.
FOR MORE EXAMPLES GO TO:
www.heritage.org/VoterFraud

RECOMMENDED WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR VOTE

There are several steps that can be taken to improve the integrity of both the voter registration and voting processes. These procedures will not stop all forms of fraud practiced by vote thieves, but when implemented and enforced in combination, they can be a powerful weapon to deter and prevent many types of voter fraud—and they do not prevent eligible citizens from voting.

Preventing fraud in the first place is much easier than trying to detect, investigate, and prosecute it after it occurs. Without proper procedures in place, detecting voter fraud is an extremely difficult undertaking. Moreover, prosecutors faced with burgeoning caseloads often give a very low priority to prosecuting election fraud, especially after the election is over.

Procedures that election officials can and should implement to secure your vote include:

- ◆ **PHOTOGRAPHIC, GOVERNMENT-ISSUED IDENTIFICATION TO VOTE**—Photo IDs should be required for both in-person voting and absentee balloting. With absentee ballots, voters should be required to provide either a photocopy of the ID when they mail in the absentee ballot or the identification number of their state-issued driver’s license or photo ID card. For the small percentage of individuals who do not already have an ID, states should issue free ID cards for voting.
- ◆ **PROOF OF CITIZENSHIP TO REGISTER TO VOTE**—Anyone registering to vote should be required to provide proof of U.S. citizenship such as a birth certificate, naturalization papers, or other documents including those that the federal government requires all employers to check before hiring a new employee.
- ◆ **JURY FORMS AND DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY DATABASES**—All state and federal courts should be required to notify local election officials when individuals summoned for jury duty from voter registration rolls are excused because they are not U.S. citizens. All state voter registration databases should run frequent comparisons with noncitizen databases maintained by the Department of Homeland Security to detect individuals who have registered to vote but who are not citizens.
- ◆ **INTERSTATE VOTER REGISTRATION CROSSCHECK PROGRAM**—The State of Kansas initiated a program to compare state voter registration rolls to detect individuals who are registered in more than one state and may have voted unlawfully in the same election in different states. All states should participate in this program to increase the accuracy of voter registration information and detect possible fraud.
- ◆ **ACCURACY CHECKS OF VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION**—All states should verify the accuracy of their voter registration information by comparing it with other information databases such as Department of Motor Vehicle driver’s license and Social Security Administration records, as well as tax and other county and state records.

DEBUNKING MYTHS

Several states, including Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas, have implemented voter ID laws in recent years to prevent and detect voter fraud.

Critics of voter ID laws claim that requiring the presentation of a valid ID can only prevent impersonation fraud at the polling place. Voter ID laws, however, can also prevent the misuse and theft of absentee ballots if identification is required for both forms of voting. Such laws can also prevent individuals from voting under fictitious voter registrations or voting by aliens, whether they are present legally or illegally in the country. In some instances, voter ID laws may prevent double voting by individuals registered in more than one state or locality if the information on their ID does not match their registration information or they try to use an ID from another state to vote.

Perhaps the biggest myth about voter ID laws is that they depress turnout, especially by minority voters. Years of turnout data from states that have photo ID laws show the opposite. Wherever photo ID requirements have been implemented, they have not reduced turnout. In fact, minority turnout has gone up in photo ID states. For example, in 2008, after implementing new voter ID laws, both Georgia and Indiana experienced larger increases in turnout, including of minority voters, in the presidential election than many states without a photo ID requirement. In Georgia, the turnout of both Hispanics and Africans Americans increased dramatically in both the 2008 presidential and 2010 midterm congressional elections when compared to the 2004 presidential and 2006 congressional elections when there was no photo ID requirement in place.

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts a survey of turnout after every federal election and provides a table detailing turnout by race in every state. According to the Census, in the 2012 presidential election, the black turnout rate in Georgia was higher

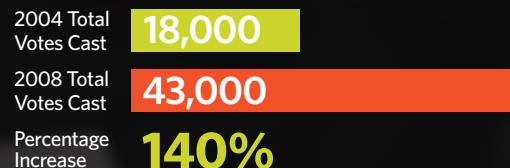
than white turnout even with its voter ID requirement in place.⁷ In 2012, in Indiana, which has one of the strictest voter ID laws in the country, black voter turnout was 10 percentage points higher than white voter turnout. In 2012, in Tennessee, which had just implemented its voter ID law, black voter turnout was three percentage points higher than white voter turnout.

Other studies of past elections support the conclusion that voter ID laws have not reduced the turnout rates of minority voters. One such study concluded that “concerns about voter identification laws affecting turnout are much ado about nothing.”⁸

Polling shows that requiring ID to vote (as well as requiring proof of citizenship to register) is consistently supported by a majority of Americans no matter their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status or party affiliation.⁹ That is no doubt because they know that they need an ID in their everyday lives to cash a check, buy alcohol or tobacco, purchase cold medicine or get a prescription filled in some states, see their doctor, take the SAT, buy a gun, check into a hotel, get a fishing or hunting license, open a post office box, board an airplane, obtain a marriage license, or get into many government buildings.

Georgia Voter Turnout, by Racial Group, 2004 and 2008

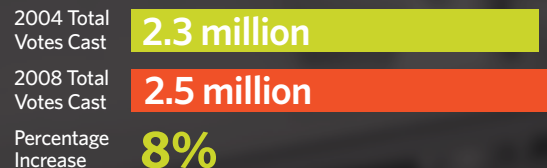
Voter Demographic HISPANIC/LATINO



Voter Demographic BLACK



Voter Demographic WHITE



Source: Brian P. Kemp, Georgia Secretary of State, “Voting with Photo Identification,” PowerPoint presentation made at the Conservative Leadership Conference of the Civitas Institute, March 2, 2012.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROTECT YOUR VOTE AND ENSURE ELECTION INTEGRITY?

- ◆ **TALK TO YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS** about the importance of voting, the danger of voter fraud, and the common sense steps that can be taken to ensure election integrity.
- ◆ **DISTRIBUTE COPIES OF THIS BOOKLET** to people in your circle of influence.
- ◆ **BRING UP YOUR CONCERNS** about election integrity in letters to the editor and when calling in to talk radio shows.
- ◆ **RAISE QUESTIONS** about voter fraud and implementing procedures to secure the ballot when participating in local town hall and other public meetings.
- ◆ **VOLUNTEER** to work as a local polling official or be a designated poll watcher for a candidate or political party.

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Threats to your vote DO exist!

The United States has a long history of voter fraud that has been documented by historians and journalists. Such fraud can make the difference in a close election, and we have many elections – particularly at the local and state level – that are decided by a very small number of votes.

Free and fair elections are the key to preserving our democracy. Every American citizen who is eligible should be able to vote, but it is equally important that every citizen's vote not be diluted or stolen through fraud, especially fraud that could change the outcome of an election. Election integrity is fundamental to securing free and fair elections.

DOES YOUR VOTE COUNT? pulls back the curtain to reveal different types of voter fraud and startling, real instances where fraud has imperiled the integrity of elections. Fortunately, steps can – and should – be taken to ensure the integrity of elections and protect your vote and the democratic process that is the heart of our republic.

FOR MORE EXAMPLES OF VOTER FRAUD GO TO:

www.heritage.org/VoterFraud



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