

DOES YOUR VOTE COUNT?

ENSURING ELECTION INTEGRITY AND

MAKING SURE EVERY VOTE COUNTS

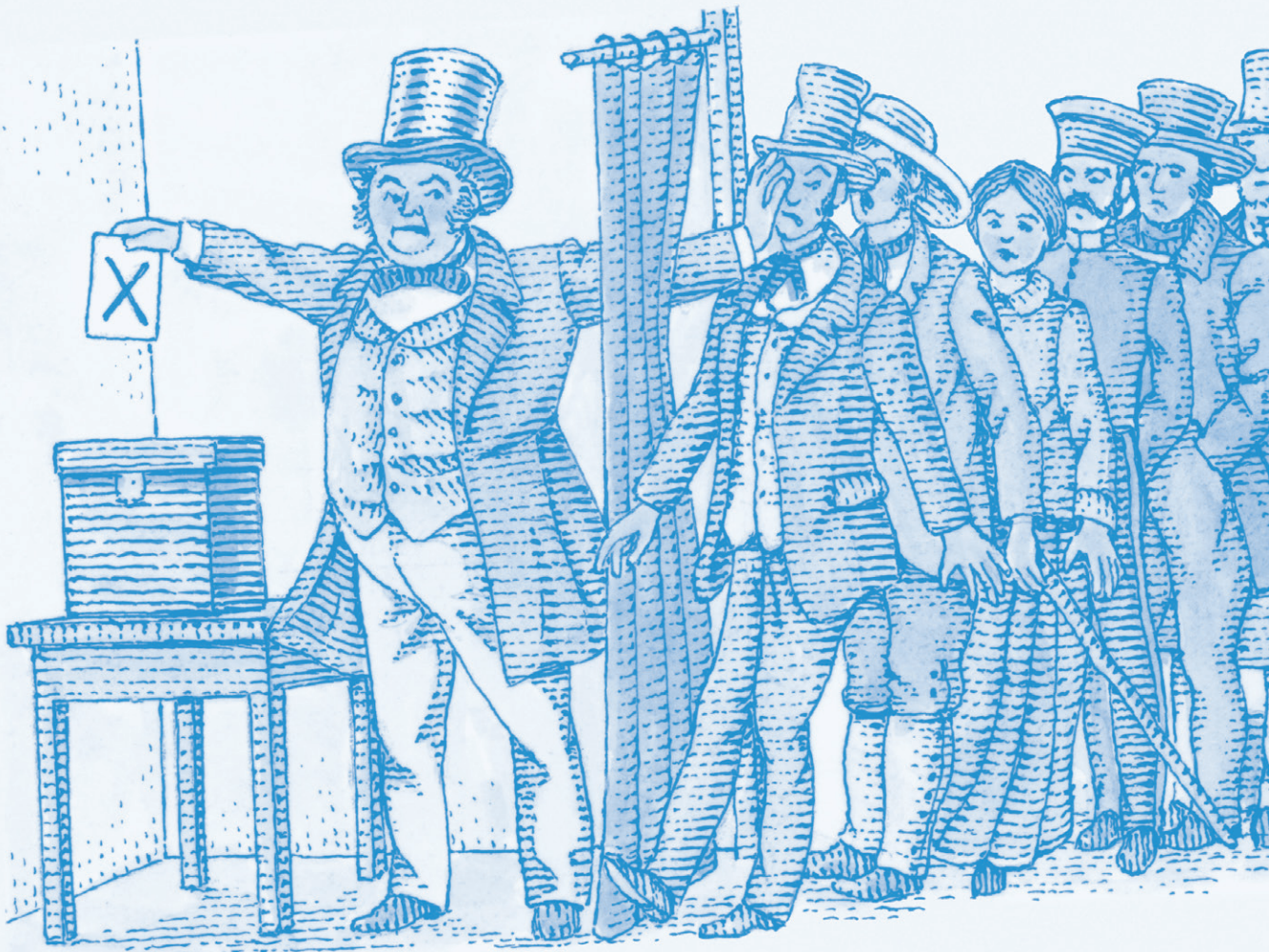


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**Read on for shocking and all-too-common stories of election fraud—
*and what can be done to stop it.***



“Elections belong to the people.”

— *A. Lincoln*

The Importance of Honest Elections

Preserving the great experiment that is the American Republic depends on **free, fair, and honest elections**. Whether selecting a city mayor or the President of the United States, every American must be able to trust the process and the result; otherwise, the democratic system breaks down. As an eligible citizen, you must know that your vote is not being stolen or diluted by thieves, fraudsters, or preventable errors. “Every vote that is fraudulently manufactured disenfranchises the legitimate voter and makes a mockery of our political process.”¹

Elections are avenues to political power and prestige. There will always be those who would rather steal an election than risk losing. Some mistakenly claim there is not enough fraud to justify **commonsense 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

Election Fraud Has Long Been A Problem

The U.S. Supreme Court acknowledged in 2008 that “flagrant examples” of fraud “have been documented throughout this Nation’s history by respected historians and journalists.” This fraud, as the Court further observed, “demonstrate[s] that not only is the risk of voter fraud real but that it could affect the outcome of a close election.”³

Such wrongdoing is not a modern invention. New York City’s infamous political machine, Tammany Hall, was synonymous with election fraud—in one election in 1844, 55,000 votes were recorded even though there were only 41,000 eligible voters.⁴ Those early traditions of fraud have just grown more inventive.

1844

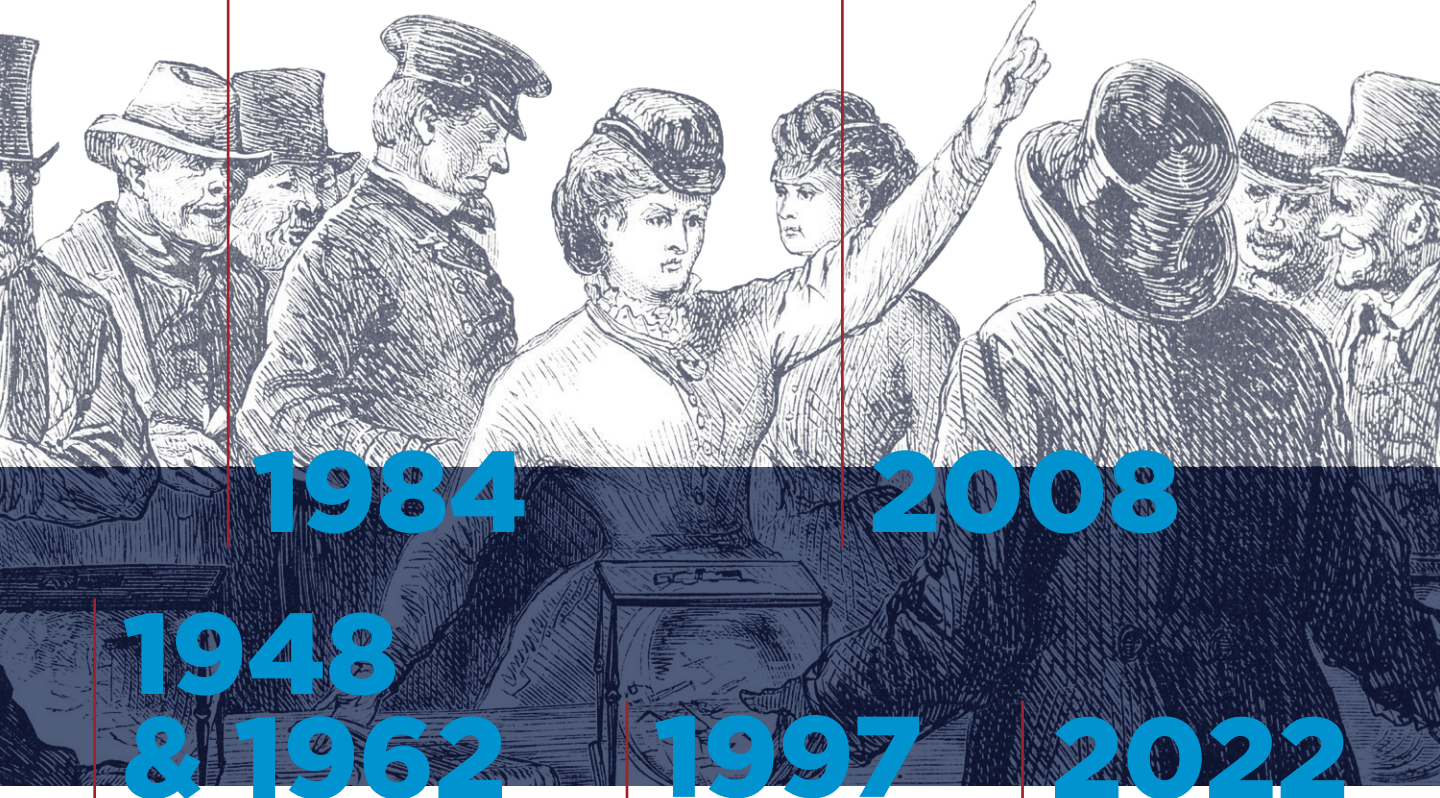


1904

The 1904 Colorado gubernatorial election was tainted by intense corruption. Democrat Alva Adams was declared the winner with 123,092 votes (50.64%) to Republican James H. Peabody’s 113,754 (46.80%). In Denver, voters cast multiple ballots, using disguises and voting in the name of deceased voters, for Adams.⁵ Mine owners threatened to fire their employees unless they voted for Peabody.⁶ Peabody contested the outcome, prompting a legislative investigation that heard from more than 2,000 witnesses over several months. As a result of widespread fraud, neither side could credibly claim that the result was legitimate. The legislature ended up striking a compromise, which resulted in Lieutenant Governor Jesse McDonald assuming the office.⁷

In 1984, a state grand jury report detailed a 14-year successful conspiracy in Brooklyn that resulted in thousands of fraudulent votes being cast through impersonation fraud and false registrations. The grand jury recommended that New York implement a voter ID requirement—something the state has never done.¹⁰

In 2008, a congressional race in North Carolina's Ninth District was overturned by the State Board of Election because of “overwhelming” evidence of absentee ballot fraud that “tainted” the results.



1984

2008

1948
& 1962

1997

2022

Two future Presidents' early encounters with fraud may have changed the history of the nation. In 1948, Lyndon B. Johnson won his Democratic primary runoff election for the U.S. Senate by 87 votes after more than 200 fraudulent votes were inserted in the notorious “Ballot Box 13” by the local political machine in Jim Wells County, Texas, to ensure that Johnson won the election.⁸ Jimmy Carter had to go to court to contest his loss in his first election, a Democratic primary for the Georgia Senate in 1962. A court declared Carter the winner because of voter fraud by another local political machine that had stolen his election.⁹

In 1997, a Miami mayor's race was overturned because fraud, including extensive absentee ballot fraud, was so pervasive that “the integrity of the election was adversely affected.” The Miami Herald won a Pulitzer Prize in 1999 for its in-depth investigation of this tainted election.

In 2022, a former Congressman and political consultant pleaded guilty to bribing poll managers in Philadelphia to manufacture fraudulent ballots in multiple elections for multiple candidates who were his clients.¹¹

Election Vulnerabilities by the Numbers



In a review of voter registration lists and voter histories in the 2016 and 2018 elections from 42 states, the Public Interest Legal Foundation found more than 144,000 cases of potential election fraud¹³, including:

34,000 votes

cast in the names of individuals who were registered at nonresidential addresses, including vacant lots, city parks, and basketball courts.

More than **95,000 individuals**

who voted twice because they were registered twice either in the same state or in different states.

Almost **15,000 votes**

cast in the names of voters who were actually deceased.

A review of state voter registration list by the Pew Center on the States in 2012 found:

24 million registrations

(nearly 1 in 8) are inaccurate, out-of-date, or duplicates.

2.8 million people

are registered in two or more states.

1.8 million registered voters

are dead.¹²

Types of Election Fraud

Many different forms of election fraud can be used to steal votes and potentially change the outcome of an election. They include:

Fraudulent Use of Absentee Ballots

Requesting absentee ballots and voting without the knowledge of the actual voter; voting in the name of a deceased individual whose name has not been removed from the voter rolls; 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 for whom to vote.

Ineligible Voting

Illegal registration and voting by individuals who are not eligible to vote, which would include:

- Convicted felons whose rights have not been restored.
- Minors.
- Aliens (non-citizens).
- Non-residents.

Impersonation Fraud at the Polls

Voting in the name of legitimate voters or voters who have died, moved away, or otherwise lost their right to vote because they are felons but remain registered.

Buying Votes

Paying voters to cast either an in-person or an absentee ballot for a particular candidate.

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 or issue to be listed on the official ballot.

Duplicate Voting

Registering in multiple locations and voting in the same election in more than one jurisdiction or state.

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.

Altering the Vote Count

Changing the actual vote count either in a precinct or at the central location where votes are counted.

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."

DOCUMENTED FRAUD: Heritage's Election Fraud Map

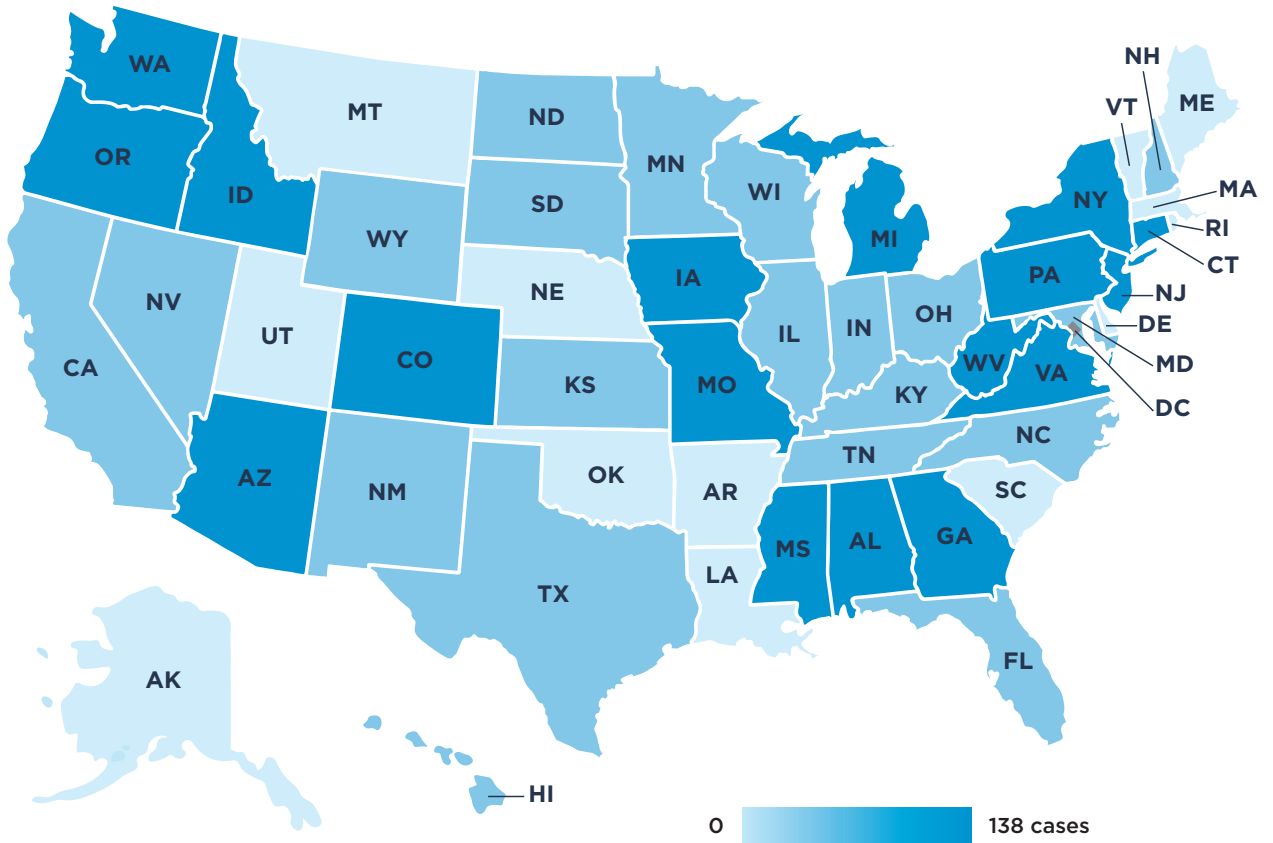
The Heritage Foundation's Election Fraud Map documents hundreds of cases of proven fraud from across the country and is regularly updated with new cases.

While not a comprehensive list, the database provides a sampling of cases that demonstrate the vulnerabilities in the election process and the ways in which fraud is committed, sometimes by just one person taking advantage of the system to cast fraudulent votes and other times by a group of conspirators trying to steal an election. The database is updated as new cases are adjudicated and provides information and supporting documentation on each case.

FEATURES INCLUDE:

- Adjudicated cases involving **criminal convictions, civil penalties, and judicial and official findings of fraud.**
- Year and location where the fraud occurred.
- Summary of how the fraud occurred and identities of the fraudsters.
- Citations to source materials such as reputable media reports and court documents.





Scan to see
an updated
state-by-state map



Debunking Myths and Misinformation

For years, the Left has been disseminating **outright lies** about election security initiatives implemented in various states and the real threats to democracy posed by unsecured elections. Below are just a few examples of these false narratives and the facts that disprove them.

MYTH:
Voter ID requirements are ineffective in preventing potential voter fraud.

FACT:

Voter ID laws, in addition to preventing impersonation fraud at the polls, prevent the misuse and theft of absentee ballots if identification is required for both forms of voting—which is as it should be. Such laws can also prevent voting under fictitious voter registrations or voting by non-citizens. Voter ID laws may prevent double voting by individuals who are registered in more than one state or locality if their IDs do not match their registration information or if they try to use IDs from other states to vote. A majority of states have passed and implemented voter ID laws to prevent election fraud. Every state that has an ID requirement also provides a free ID to anyone who does not already have one.

MYTH:
Requiring a voter ID depresses turnout and suppresses minority voters.

FACT:

The biggest myth is that voter ID laws depress turnout, especially by minority voters. Years of turnout data show that the opposite is true. Wherever photo ID requirements have been implemented, registration and turnout rates have increased. A 2019 National Bureau of Economic Research study of turnout in all 50 states concluded that voter ID “laws have no significant negative effect on registration or turnout, [either] overall or for any subgroup defined by age, gender, race, or party affiliation.”¹⁴ A 2022 study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* concluded that voter ID requirements seem to increase turnout because they “motivate and mobilize supporters of both parties.”¹⁵

MYTH:

Races are never that close, so fraud—even if it occurs—doesn't matter.

FACT:

Many elections, from town council to President of the United States, have been decided by razor-thin margins. The Public Interest Legal Foundation has collected information on elections in which there were tied votes—where a single vote would have changed the outcome. The PILF's database catalogs hundreds of U.S. elections, most of them within the past 20 years, that ended in ties or were decided by a single vote. This clearly demonstrates that one vote—legal or illegal—can determine the winner of a race.

The following are just a few recent examples in which a handful of votes decided the outcome of an election that had significant impact:

Who could forget the presidential election that hung on just 537 votes in Florida out of 105 million that were cast nationwide.¹⁹ That was the official margin of victory that delivered the presidency to George W. Bush over Al Gore.

More than 140 million¹⁷ Americans voted in the contentious 2016 election, but just 107,330¹⁸ votes (0.09% of all ballots cast) decided the race for Donald Trump. That was the margin of Trump's victory in the key states of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Michigan.

2000

2016

2008

2018

Former U.S. Senator Al Franken, D-Minn., defeated incumbent Republican Norm Coleman by a scant 215 votes out of 2.9 million cast after an intense court battle over the Election Day results. Those 215 votes sent Franken to Washington, briefly giving Democrats a filibuster-proof margin that enabled them to pass the Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as Obamacare.

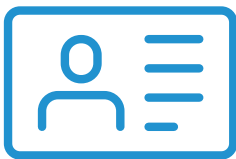
Republicans held on to their majority in the Virginia House of Delegates after a key race in just one legislative district resulted in a tie. The winner—and thus, political control of half of the state legislature—was decided by drawing lots.¹⁶

Recommended Ways to Protect Your Vote

Commonsense reforms can improve the integrity of the voter registration, voting, and ballot counting processes. Of course, these reforms will not stop all forms of fraud or prevent all errors and mistakes, but when implemented and rigorously enforced, they can be a powerful weapon that can be used to fix potential problems before they occur and deter and prevent many types of election fraud—and they do not prevent or discourage eligible citizens from voting.

Preventing errors and fraud in the first place is much easier than trying to detect and correct problems and to investigate and prosecute fraudsters after an election. Without proper procedures in place, detecting errors and fraud is an extremely difficult undertaking. Moreover, prosecutors faced with burgeoning caseloads often fail to prioritize prosecuting election fraud, and partisan considerations may lead some to ignore potentially meritorious cases.

To help states that want to enhance the security of their elections and to hold those that do not accountable, The Heritage Foundation created the Election Integrity Scorecard. This online tool compares the election laws and regulations of every state and the District of Columbia that affect the security and integrity of the voting and election process to the Foundation's 50 best-practices recommendations, which 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 ID 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 Government Databases

All courts should be required to notify election officials when individuals who are summoned for jury duty from voter rolls are excused because they are non-citizens, have moved, or are ineligible felons.

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 those maintained by Departments of Motor Vehicles; public assistance agencies; the Social Security Administration; the Department of Homeland Security; and other federal, state, and county agencies.



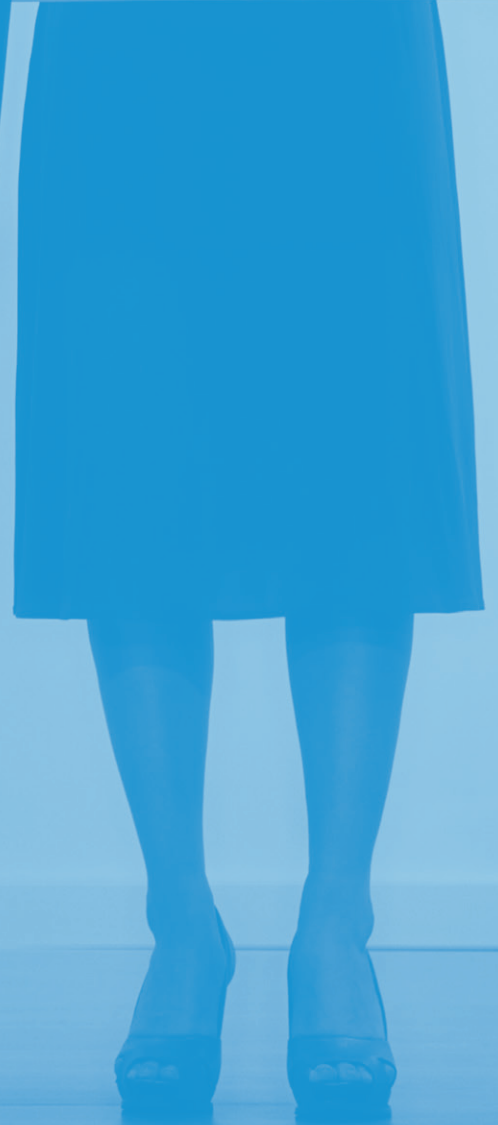


VOTE

POLLIN
 投票站 CAS
 投票所 LUG
 早莊全 PHO



VOTE



What Can You Do?

Protect your vote and ensure election integrity.

Talk to your family and friends about the importance of voting, the risk of election fraud, and the commonsense 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, when calling in to talk radio shows, or when contacting your state legislators.

Raise questions about election fraud and implementing procedures to secure the ballot when participating in local town hall and other public meetings, including meetings with your state legislators.

Educate yourself on your state's election laws and how they rank on our Election Integrity Scorecard.

Volunteer to work as a local polling official or be a designated poll watcher for a candidate or political party. You can sign up to be an Election Day poll worker on the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's website, www.eac.gov/help-america-vote.

ENDNOTES

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⁴ Tracy Campbell, *Deliver the Vote: A History of Election Fraud, An American Political Tradition—1742–2004* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2005), p. 20.

⁵ Ashley Zimmerman, “Verifiable Oddities in Colorado’s History,” Colorado General Assembly, Office of Legislative Legal Services, Colorado LegiSource, <https://legisource.net/2011/09/22/verifiable-oddities-in-colorados-history> (accessed July 24, 2025).

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⁷ Amy Zimmer, “Three Governors in One Day,” Colorado Virtual Library, Resource Sharing, Colorado State Publications Blog, November 6, 2006, <https://www.coloradovirtuallibrary.org/resource-sharing/state-pubs-blog/three-governors-in-one-day/> (accessed July 24, 2025).

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⁹ James Wooten, *Dasher: The Roots and the Rising of Jimmy Carter* (New York: Warner Books, 1979), p. 242–251.

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¹¹ Press release, “Former U.S. Congressman and Philadelphia Political Operative Pleads Guilty to Election Fraud Charges,” U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney’s Office, Eastern District of Pennsylvania, June 6, 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edpa/pr/former-us-congressman-and-philadelphia-political-operative-pleads-guilty-election-fraud> (accessed July 24, 2025).

¹² Pew Center on the States, “Inaccurate, Costly, and Inefficient: Evidence That America’s Voter Registration System Needs an Upgrade,” *Issue Brief*, February 2012, https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs_assets/2012/pewupgradingvoterregistrationpdf.pdf (accessed July 24, 2025).

¹³ Public Interest Legal Foundation, *Critical Condition: American Voter Rolls Filled With Errors, Dead Voters, and Duplicate Registrations*, September 2020, https://publicinterestlegal.org/pilf-files/Report-Critical_Condition-Web-FINAL-FINAL.pdf (accessed July 24, 2025).

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¹⁸ Tim Meko, Denise Lu, and Lazaro Gamio, “How Trump Won the Presidency with Razor-Thin Margins in Swing States,” *The Washington Post*, November 3, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/2016-election/swing-state-margins/> (accessed July 24, 2025).

¹⁹ Federal Election Commission, *Federal Elections 2000: Election Results for the U.S. President, the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives*, June 2021, pp. 4 and 18, <https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federaelections00.pdf> (accessed July 24, 2025).



Threats to your vote DO exist!

The United States has a long history of election fraud that has been documented by historians and journalists. Such fraud can make the difference in a close election, and many elections—particularly at the local and state levels—that are decided by a very small number of votes. **Free, fair, and honest elections are the key** to preserving our democratic Republic. 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 errors or fraud, especially if it could change the outcome of an election. Election integrity is a fundamental requirement of any free nation.

DOES YOUR VOTE COUNT? pulls back the curtain to reveal different types of election fraud and startling, real instances of fraud that have imperiled the integrity of elections. Fortunately, there are commonsense reforms that can secure and protect your vote and the democratic process that is the heart of our Republic.



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