



ALL VOTING IS LOCAL NATIONAL PRO-VOTER AGENDA

Our Vision for the Future
of Voting in America

JUNE 2024





WE BELIEVE A PRO-VOTER FUTURE IS POSSIBLE

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Exactly 60 years ago this June, civil rights organizations launched the Freedom Summer of 1964, a landmark campaign that aimed to not only register thousands of Black people to vote but also to make voting more equitable and accessible for Black voters across the Jim Crow South. Undeterred by the brutality and violence they faced, Freedom Summer organizers drew the country's attention to the fight for voting rights in Mississippi and were able to establish 41 Freedom Schools for more than 3,000 young Black people, empowering them with the tools and information they needed to continue to fight for their right to vote. The courage demonstrated by thousands of Freedom Summer organizers and volunteers galvanized the country leading up to the March from Selma to Montgomery in the spring of 1965, where police, state troopers, and a citizen mob attacked civil rights organizers marching for voting rights in Alabama. The actions taken and sacrifices made by these pro-voter organizers culminated in the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which provided provisions against many of the tactics designed to keep Black voters from the polls and provided direct federal intervention to enable African Americans to register and vote.



Expansions of voter access in the decades since the Freedom Summer and the passage of the Voting Rights Act honor the legacy, courage, and sacrifice of every single person – known and unknown – who paved the way for a fully realized American democracy. And yet, as we approach the 2024 general election, the persistence of widespread efforts to roll back voter access, unprecedented threats to election workers, and new attacks on vote counting and certification demonstrate with brutal clarity how much work is yet to be done and how important the advocacy work we are a part of is. Since the 2013 Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* gutted core protections provided by the Voting Rights Act, at least 31 states have passed 103 restrictive voting laws according to the [most recent data](#)¹, most still in effect today. Many of these laws are also [racially discriminatory](#)², heavily contributing to the [widening racial turnout gap](#)³ between white voters and voters of color.

All Voting is Local's National Pro-Voter Agenda is an affirmative and achievable vision for the future of voting at the state and local levels. Drawing on best practices from across the country, it lays out how state and local officials can exercise their wide-ranging authority over election administration in a way that expands, rather than constricts, access to the ballot for every voter. From deciding how to make registration available to the process for counting ballots, these officials make decisions every day about who gets to vote and who doesn't, which votes count and which don't. This document was created for those decision-makers while keeping front of mind the communities our organization serves. As All Voting continues advocating for policies that expand access to the ballot, especially for voters of color, this agenda will serve to clearly and accurately define our positions and our priorities – across our eight states and across the country.

Hannah Fried Executive Director, All Voting is Local

WHO WE ARE

All Voting is Local (All Voting) is a 501(c)(3), nonpartisan, multistate organization that fights against state and local voting policies that silence Americans' voices, particularly for Black, Brown, Native American, and other historically marginalized communities – not just in election years but every year. We were founded on the principle that the problems people face when trying to vote are solvable if state and local decision-makers are accountable to the communities they serve. All Voting is committed to working with our partners to advance fair, inclusive rules on voter registration, remove barriers that make it more difficult for people to vote, and ensure every vote counts. All Voting is on the ground in eight states: **Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.** Within these states, we are active in more than 60 counties that are home to more than 21 million people of color. During the 2022 cycle, All Voting programs expanded access for more than 635,000 voters.



BACKGROUND

For nearly 50 years, Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act assured voters in states with a history of discriminatory policies – including Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia – that any changes made to voting processes and procedures had to be transparent, vetted, and fair to all voters, regardless of race. That was until *Shelby County v. Holder* in 2013, when the U.S. Supreme Court gutted Section 5, thereby removing these essential provisions. And again in the 2021 ruling in *Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee* that functionally rewrote Section 2, making it harder for civil rights-oriented groups to file lawsuits that combat discriminatory policies. At its most robust, the Voting Rights Act created an opportunity for future efforts to enshrine specific, key protections for voter registration and voter access. The current moment – characterized by unprecedented attacks on democratic norms and by wave after wave of state-level anti-voter legislation – demands such action. This is why voting rights advocates, community leaders, and members of Congress have called for the restoration and strengthening of the Voting Rights Act through federal legislation such as the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

It is also why All Voting is Local developed and released its Pro-Voter Agenda, which can be easily referenced by election officials, policymakers, voters, and the media alike. As anti-voter extremists embrace attitudes that harken back to the times of the Jim Crow South, and amplify baseless claims about the legitimacy of our elections in an effort to suppress voters – particularly in Black, Brown, Native American, and other historically marginalized communities – All Voting is Local's Pro-Voter Agenda aspires to build a more equitable and inclusive democracy, where *everyone* has the ability to participate *equally*, empowering the communities we serve to make sure their voices are heard.



OUR PRO-VOTER AGENDA

An April 2024 survey conducted by All Voting is Local's Data and Research Team found that the majority (83%) of Americans believe voting should be as easy as possible, and they support policies that would make access equitable for all eligible voters. In this agenda, we have compiled a list of priority policies that center voter access while ensuring elections are safe and secure.

We believe that all local, state, and federal voting policies should prioritize the following:

- ✓ Easy and accessible voter registration by mail, online, or in person.
- ✓ Responsible voter registration list maintenance processes that preserve eligible voters in state voter roll systems and block erroneous removal of otherwise eligible voters for improper reasons.
- ✓ Expansive opportunities to vote by mail, in person, on election day, and for at least two weeks before.
- ✓ Accurate and efficient vote counting and certification that is respected by all parties involved.

But that's not all. All Voting breaks down the specific voting policies that should be adopted at the state level to realize a truly democratic election system that is secure and accessible for all voters.



"We Shall Overcome (Freedom Summer Bus)"
STEPHEN SCHAPIRO



We believe
the following

19 VOTING POLICIES

★ **APPLY TO ALL** ★

**federal ✓
state ✓
and local ✓
elections:**

Voter Registration ✓

Voter Registration

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Election Administration

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Voting Methods and Opportunities to Vote

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1 **Automatic Voter Registration (AVR)**

All Voting believes in easy and accessible voter registration by mail, online, or in person, through all federal, state, and local government agencies, such as the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Eligible voters should be automatically included in the state's registration rolls whenever they conduct a qualified transaction, known as "front-end" AVR, at a federal, state, or local government office unless they affirmatively request to opt out, providing a quick and easy way to register voters proactively. All Voting will also support "back-end" AVR, where government agencies share information voters transact in their respective systems to state election officials through secured and encrypted means. This allows a voter's registration to update in near real-time. The voter does not need to confirm the change at the time of the transaction and is instead sent a notification that allows them to confirm the changes.

2 **Same-Day Voter Registration**

All Voting believes that voters should have the ability to update their registration information and/or register at all times, while also allowing the choice to vote in person at the polls during early voting or on election day. Voters should be able to do so without additional ID requirements, so long as the voter affirms, by signature, their identity and place of residence. Voters should not be required to go to their local election offices to register and then return to the polling place to vote, as that undue burden would lead to voter attrition.

3 Responsible List Maintenance

All Voting supports responsible voter list maintenance done well in advance of an election and in alignment with the requirements of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA). Responsible list maintenance requires that jurisdictions take into account all relevant information that might indicate that a voter's eligibility has changed and to notify voters of those changes before any actions are taken to remove eligibility. Appropriate list maintenance ensures voters get accurate information about voting, such as where to vote and who is on their ballot, and it can insulate voters from challenges to their eligibility by a third party.

4 Expanded Language Access

All Voting believes every voter should have equitable access to the polls, regardless of the language they speak. Consistent with the Voting Rights Act, if a jurisdiction reaches a threshold of 5% or 10,000 people speaking a covered primary language other than English, election officials are required to provide voter education and voting process translation without delay. We believe those with both limited English proficiency and/or the inability to read or write must also receive additional levels of support, separate from expanded language access, through accessibility provisions that allow for telephonic and other levels of assistance, which are not currently provided uniformly throughout the voting process. Speaking a language other than English, or not having proficiency in English, should not be a barrier to accessing the ballot. Support should be provided, or accessible, for voters where there is a need for language assistance.

5 Use of Paper Ballots

All Voting believes that a paper record of each ballot ensures the most reliable and replicable election results. We believe hand-marked paper ballots are the best method for recording votes, securing our elections, and accurately reflecting the will of the voters in every race. Paper ballots are widely recognized by experts as one of the most important election security measures that states can adopt. All Voting is Local supports the availability of ballot marking or other devices so that all voters, regardless of physical ability, may cast their ballot privately and independently. When selections are recorded on paper, voters can easily verify that their ballot accurately reflects their choices. Paper ballots also facilitate post-election risk-limiting audits, where election workers can check the paper records against electronic vote totals to confirm that voting machines are working as intended. All polling locations that use electronic voting machines should be required to have on hand a supply of backup paper ballots, amounting to 20% of voters in each precinct, in case of a technological issue with their machines.

6 Election Official and Election Worker Protections

All Voting believes that since we entrust election officials to uphold our democratic systems, in turn, they should be able to trust that they can do so safely and without fear, intimidation, or threats of violence. In recent years, election officials, staff, and poll workers have been subjected to threats, accusations of crime, and leaked private information (doxing) at historically high rates. As a result, some states have enacted legislation specifically to protect election officials, staff, and poll workers.

7 Nonmaterial Errors and Voter Eligibility

All Voting believes mistakes by voters – such as forgetting to include the date, a signature mismatch, and other nonmaterial errors – when filling out a ballot or voter registration form are common and should not disqualify a voter from participating in our elections without giving them ample opportunity to remedy the error. It is essential to have statewide notice and cure practices put into place to prevent counties from straying from these guidelines to avoid potential litigation against counties and/or states and to ensure voters have a clear way to cure issues and participate in the democratic process.

8 Expanded Access for Voters With Disabilities

All Voting supports ample and accessible opportunities to register and/or vote for everyone, regardless of physical ability. The assistance provided for in-person registration options and the designated voting and/or registering locations must comply with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). The Americans with Disabilities Act, the Voting Rights Act, and other federal laws have provided important protections for accessible voting and can be strengthened and built upon with policies including, but not limited to these:

- ✓ Wherever applicable, online registration and election websites should meet accessibility standards to help disabled voters find the information they need to register.
- ✓ The Help America Vote Act's (HAVA) requirement for one accessible voting machine at each voting location is the bare minimum. Elections offices should be aware of needs in their community and make plans accordingly to ensure voters who need to utilize accessible voting machines do not have longer wait times or burdens than other voters.
- ✓ Voting sites should be pretested for potential barriers for voters with disabilities.
- ✓ Increased poll worker training around voting with a disability should be provided to ensure that disabled voters are permitted to have privacy while voting and bring an allowed person to assist them in the voting process.
- ✓ Barriers to voting by mail should be reduced by allowing caretakers, family members, or other individuals to assist with and return ballots.

All Voting is Local believes in expansive opportunities to vote, including the following:

9 Early Voting

All Voting believes early, in-person voting should run for at least two weeks before election day, including weekend and before/after-work hour availability, to ensure voters have ample opportunity to participate in our democracy without sacrificing their other responsibilities, such as jobs and child care. Voters should have multiple options for voting early in person across their communities – such as at locations near centers for work, recreation, education, and worship – to ensure their vote can be cast conveniently.

10 Voting by Mail

All Voting believes all voters should be able to vote by mail to ensure voters have ample opportunity to vote in a manner that is safe and accessible for them. A robust vote by mail program will include the following:

- ✓ Voters should be allowed to return completed ballots through accessible and secure methods. This may include returning their ballot in person to election officials, at a drop box or voting location, by mail, or through delivery by a family member/household member/other third party. Voters should be allowed to request an absentee ballot by mail with ease. They should not require an excuse, and there should be no requirements for a witness, notary, or other secondary proof of signature to apply for a vote-by-mail ballot.
- ✓ Election offices should be required to mail a vote-by-mail ballot within two days of receipt of the ballot request.
- ✓ A vote-by-mail policy should include strong opportunities to amend any errors on a ballot (cure).
- ✓ Voters should be able to track their ballot through an election office-provided service.
- ✓ Voters should have the ability to “spoil” their ballot if they choose to vote in person (early or on election day) instead.
- ✓ Election offices should provide pre-paid postage for ballots.
- ✓ Election offices should accept and count ballots that have been postmarked by election day, rather than having a requirement that ballots be received by election day.

11 Equitable Voting Access for Justice-Impacted Voters

All Voting believes all current or formerly incarcerated individuals should retain their right to register and vote. While jailed or incarcerated, voters should have access to accurate and up-to-date information on upcoming elections, voter registration processes, ways to get a ballot, and access to voting. All Voting supports voting by mail from jail, as well as the placement of polling locations in detention centers, and the dissemination of voting guides and poll books inside of jails for direct use by people currently incarcerated and those administering the voting methods. We also recommend having jails designated as voter registration agencies under the National Voter Registration Act, and upon entering custody, having voter registration provided and/or allowing incarcerated persons to copy their relevant ID numbers so that they can include that in any future voter registration paperwork. All Voting believes all eligible citizens should remain enfranchised voters regardless of whether they are or have been incarcerated. Formerly incarcerated individuals should not lose their voter registration status or ability to vote due to a criminal conviction.

12 Accessible and Well-Resourced Voting Locations

All Voting believes all voters should be able to easily access and cast a ballot in person at an early voting site, election day polling location, or vote center. Election offices should have standards that ensure they have adequate and accessible voting locations, parking, signage, provisional ballots, machines, and poll workers to smoothly administer their elections and support voters, including those with disabilities. This will require continued assessment.

- ✓ Voters should be able to cast their ballot within 30 minutes of arriving at their voting location.
- ✓ Voting locations should be accessible by public transit (where available).
- ✓ An estimated [21.3 million eligible voters have a disability that affects mobility](#).⁴ Voting locations should be accessible to all voters and be free of impediments that may make it difficult for a voter to access the ballot.
- ✓ Voting locations should offer curbside voting and include adequate equipment and support for voters with disabilities. Administrators should, at minimum, comply with federal law, which requires at least one accessible machine at each polling place.

13 Expanded Voter Identification Options

All Voting supports states using a variety of different methods to verify a voter's identity at the time of registration and/or voting and the elimination of a photo ID requirement altogether, requiring only [Help America Vote Act-style documentation](#)⁵ at the time of registration, if ever. [Our study](#)⁶ shows that obtaining a Voter ID is cost-prohibitive for many voters. A total of 36 states have laws requesting or requiring voters to show some form of identification at the polls. The remaining 14 states and Washington, D.C., use other methods to verify the identity of voters. Most frequently, other identifying information provided at the polling place, such as address verification, is checked against information on file. When voting by mail, a voter should not be required to photocopy and submit their ID when submitting a completed ballot; rather, election administrators should check signatures on ballot envelopes against those on registration records. If ID is required, All Voting supports only those expanded ID options that include forms of non-photo ID, such as a bank statement, utility bill, or lease.

14 Protections for Voters

All Voting believes all voters should feel comfortable when casting a ballot via whatever method they choose and be able to do so free from intimidation. Federal regulations such as the Voting Rights Act and Civil Rights Act of 1965 protect against intimidation, and states can enforce and strengthen these regulations to ensure all voters feel safe, whether putting their ballot in a drop box or going to a voting site. Elections offices should enforce and strengthen regulations that protect voters from intimidation by poll watchers, state and local law enforcement, or anti-democracy groups.

Voters should also be protected from unwarranted challenges to their eligibility and if removed from the rolls should be given ample notice and enough time to reregister ahead of any upcoming elections. The influx of citizen-led mass voter challenges is part of a widespread effort to undermine confidence in elections. These challenges are being used to bog down local election offices with a high volume of erroneous challenges on voters' eligibility, and they take away resources and valuable time from elections officials.



15 Notice and Opportunity to Cure

All Voting believes in a robust notice-and-cure program that gives voters at least eight days from the time an error on a ballot is discovered and the voter is notified, to cure said issue. This process should also provide the same amount of time for a voter to provide identification that would make a provisional ballot count as a normal vote. The term “cure” refers to the process of fixing or remedying the perceived error(s) on a ballot.

We support the following:

- ✓ Requiring election officials to notify voters within two days of reviewing the ballot if any discrepancies exist.
- ✓ Requiring election officials to contact voters by phone, text, email, **and** mail, within two days of identifying any errors on their ballot.
- ✓ After a voter is successfully notified, they should be allowed up to three weeks (and no less than eight days) to fix any perceived error.
- ✓ Election offices should be specific about the documentation necessary to fix the error and the date the office needs to receive it so as not to delay certification.

16 Risk-Limiting Audits

All Voting believes transparent, risk-limiting audits are an effective way to ensure a correct count and detect any statistical anomalies before results are certified, as they can help to verify election results while also ensuring voter confidence in our elections. This is an audit method based on statistical principles that involve cross-checking paper ballots with machine totals to confirm election results. A statistical formula is used to determine the number of ballots to be sampled for the results to be statistically significant. This formula takes into account factors like the margin of victory and the total number of votes cast. We all want our election results to be accurate and trustworthy, and that means double-checking tabulations before certification. We believe risk-limiting audits should occur after every election and be explicitly authorized in state law. They should have a thorough, pre-established methodology that follows established security best practices and be conducted with trusted technology and tools. Election officials must maintain custody of ballots and other election materials per federal and state law.

17 Ballot Imaging

All Voting believes that ballot images – a replica of the ballot cast by each voter on the official election tabulation system – are live ballots until election results are certified and should, therefore, not be released to the public until after county and state certification.

18 Pre-canvassing

All Voting believes counties should be able to begin pre-canvassing, or pre-processing mail-in and early vote ballots, two weeks before the election, and counties with at least 10,000 registered voters should be required to start pre-canvassing by the fourth day before election day. Pre-canvassing is the process of preparing and confirming the accuracy of ballots before the start of tabulation in an effort to get accurate and timely election results without a delay in certification. Importantly, the pre-canvassing process requires that no information concerning the count should be released until polls are closed on election day.

19 Certification

All Voting believes certification – the written statement attesting that the tabulation and canvassing of the election is complete and accurate – is an essential part of the election process and must be completed in accordance with the timelines set out in federal and state law. The powers of state officials in the certification process must be clearly defined and limited, and those responsible for certifying federal elections should not be allowed to rely on any information other than the election returns themselves. We believe the job of a state official reviewing election returns for certification is to make sure the math is correct and nothing more. A state official who fails to abide by their duty should be subject to immediate removal and other penalties as applicable under state law.



“
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”

HANNAH FRIED Executive Director
All Voting is Local



CONCLUSION

All Voting is Local believes that the policies laid out in this Pro-Voter Agenda are a powerful step toward a thriving democracy that enfranchises voters in local, state, and federal elections. These measures – from automatic voter registration to expanded language access to additional ways to vote in person – foster inclusivity, accessibility, and representation, empowering citizens to actively participate in our electoral processes for a more equitable American democracy. We believe that these policies go beyond just the 2024 election and that there is still more work to be done for our country to truly achieve a democracy that works for us all. Our Pro-Voter Agenda is a milestone in advancing a better future for voters that is absolutely within reach, enfranchising millions and moving our country forward.

LINK INDEX

1. “most recent data” link:
<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-law-s-roundup-may-2024>
2. “racially discriminatory” link:
<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/impact-voter-suppression-communities-color>
3. “widening racial turnout gap” link:
<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/growing-racial-disparities-voter-turnout-2008-2022>
4. “21.3 million eligible voters have a disability that affects mobility” link:
<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/enhancing-accessibility-u-s-elections/>
5. “Help America Vote Act-style documentation” link:
<https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/d/HAVA%20Eact%20Sheet.pdf>
6. “Our study” link:
<https://allvotingislocal.org/press-releases/new-report-from-all-voting-is-local-finds-first-time-voters-will-spend-over-105-to-cast-a-ballot/>





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