



Did you know?

Facts about voting from the Presbyterian Voting Campaign

Election Information

- FairVote estimates that “More than eight million American citizens cannot vote where they live, but could vote if living in another state.”
- The U.S. ranks 114th in voter turnout among recognized democracies according to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. (from *Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform*)
- It takes less than 2 minutes to register to vote. ([Vote.org](https://www.vote.org))
- Universal registration would help ensure that the more than fifty million unregistered Americans, representing nearly one-third of the eligible electorate, would be eligible to vote on election day. (from *Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform*)
- Unregistered voters are disproportionately young, low-income, or people of color.
- The United States has more than ten thousand separate voting jurisdictions with separate laws and regulations. A citizen’s right to vote is thus very much dependent on the jurisdiction in which the citizen resides. (from *Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform*)
- The 600,000 tax-paying residents of Washington, D.C., have no voting representation in the House of Representatives or in the Senate. (from *Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform*)
- In recent years only about 50–55 percent of U.S. citizens of voting age have voted in presidential elections, while smaller percentages have voted in “off-year” congressional, state and local elections. These percentages are significantly lower for racial ethnic minorities and poorer citizens. (from *Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform*)
- in 1993 Congress passed the Motor-Voter law intended to ease the registration burden for all Americans. (from *Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform*)

- Seven states allow “same day” registration, allowing citizens to register on Election Day. To find out your state's registration deadline go to [vote.org/voter-registration-deadlines](https://www.vote.org/voter-registration-deadlines) (from *Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform*)
- Drawing the boundaries of congressional and state legislative districts to their partisan advantage has become a favorite tool of both political parties. The result is that most districts are heavily stacked to favor one party. (from *Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform*)
- As a result of the controversies surrounding the 2000 presidential elections, Congress passed the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002. The act funded electronic voting equipment in every state, established an Electoral Assistance Commission and Council (from *Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform*)
- While 100 million or more Americans regularly participate in the election of the president, rarely do more than a third of that number vote in the presidential primaries and caucuses that select the party candidates (from *Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform*)

Discrimination

- In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which established restrictions on Chinese immigration and legally excluded Chinese persons from citizenship and voting.
- The 14th Amendment, passed in 1868, granted African Americans citizenship. However, the law was specifically interpreted to not include Indigenous people.
 - Indigenous people did not win the right to full citizenship until 1924 with the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act.
- The 15th Amendment, passed in 1870, prohibited federal and state governments from denying someone the right to vote based on a citizen's race, color or previous condition of servitude.
 - Unfortunately, this did not apply to women or Indigenous people.
- In 1920, more than 50 years later the 19th Amendment was passed and granted women the right to vote; however, white women disproportionately reaped the benefit. Women of color still struggled to express their right to vote. Many states completely denied Indigenous people the right to vote.
- In 1962, after fighting state-by-state, Utah was the last state to grant Indigenous people full voting rights. However, Indigenous people faced the same voter suppression tactics that were being used against Black voters.
- In 1965, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act (VRA). The VRA strengthened voting rights for Black and Indigenous people. As a result of the VRA voter registration and voter turnout for Black voters in the south increased exponentially.
- Some states have lifetime bans from the right to vote based on criminal record, even after people have served their time. In 1974, the Supreme Court upheld felon disenfranchisement laws and, as a result, by 2016 more than six million Americans could not vote due to past felony convictions.

- Every state has different laws on voting with past felony convictions. Find out what your state’s policy is related to felony disenfranchisement by visiting [ACLU’s Felony Disenfranchisement Map](#).
- On June 25, 2013, the Supreme Court ruled (5-4 vote) that Section 4(b) of the Voting Rights Act was unconstitutional because the justification had become outdated since 1965. Section 4(b) identified which states and counties were subject to the preclearance requirement based on their historical use of suppressive tactics. Without coverage under Section 4(b), the federal government can no longer use Section 5 to preempt discriminatory voting practices before they are implemented.
- Since the 2013 Supreme Court decision, voter suppression tactics increased exponentially including voter purges, restrict ID laws, poll station closures and more.
 - At least 17 million voters were purged nationwide between 2016 and 2018, similar to the number we saw between 2014 and 2016. (Brennan Center)
 - “Starting after the 2010 election, legislators in nearly half the states passed a wave of laws making it harder to vote. These new restrictions ranged from cuts to early voting to burdens on voter registration to strict voter ID requirements. While courts stepped in before the 2012 election to block many of these laws, the Supreme Court’s 2013 decision made it even easier for states to put in place restrictive voting laws.” (Brennan Center)
- The Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 4/S. 561) provides a legislative fix to prevent voter discrimination and increase transparency, thus restoring the original goal of the Voting Rights Act.
- The Native American Voting Rights Act (H.R.1694/S.739) is intended to provide the necessary resources and oversight to ensure equal access to the electoral process for Native Americans.

Voter Fraud

[brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/analysis/Briefing_Memo_Debunking_Voter_Fraud_Myth.pdf](https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/analysis/Briefing_Memo_Debunking_Voter_Fraud_Myth.pdf)

- The facts makes clear that fraud by voters at the polls is vanishingly rare, and does not happen on a scale even close to that necessary to “rig” an election.
- A study published by a Columbia University political scientist tracked incidence rates for voter fraud for two years, and found that the rare fraud that was reported generally could be traced to “false claims by the loser of a close race, mischief and administrative or voter error.”
- A comprehensive 2014 study published in The Washington Post found **31 credible instances** of impersonation fraud from 2000 to 2014, out of more than 1 billion ballots cast. Even this tiny number is likely inflated, as the study’s author counted not just prosecutions or convictions, but any and all credible claims
- Two studies done at Arizona State University, one in 2012 and another in 2016, found **10 cases** of voter impersonation fraud nationwide from 2000-2012. The follow-up study, which looked for fraud specifically in states where politicians have argued that fraud is a pernicious problem, found **zero** successful prosecutions for impersonation fraud in five states from 2012-2016.
- A review of the 2016 election found **only four** documented cases of voter fraud.

- A 2016 working paper concluded that the upper limit on **double voting in the 2012 election was 0.02%**. The paper noted that the incident rate was likely much lower, given audits conducted by 2 the researchers showed that “many, if not all, of these apparent double votes could be a result of measurement error.”
- A 2014 paper concluded that “the likely percent of non-citizen voters in recent US elections is 0.”
- A 2014 nationwide study found “no evidence of widespread impersonation fraud” in the 2012 election.
- A 2014 study that examined impersonation fraud both at the polls and by mail ballot found zero instances in the jurisdictions studied.
- A 2014 study by the non-partisan Government Accountability Office, which reflected a literature review of the existing research on voter fraud, noted that the studies consistently found “few instances of in-person voter fraud.”
- While writing a 2012 book, a researcher went back 30 years to try to find an example of voter impersonation fraud determining the outcome of an election, but was unable to find even one.
- A 2012 study exhaustively pulled records from every state for all alleged election fraud, and found the overall fraud rate to be “infinitesimal” and impersonation fraud by voters at the polls to be the rarest fraud of all: only 10 cases alleged in 12 years. The same study found only 56 alleged cases of non-citizen voting, in 12 years.
- A 2012 assessment of Georgia’s 2006 election found “no evidence that election fraud was committed under the auspices of deceased registrants.”
- A 2011 study by the Republican National Lawyers Association found that, between 2000 and 2010, 21 states had 1 or 0 convictions for voter fraud or other kinds of voting irregularities.
- A 2010 book cataloguing reported incidents of voter fraud concluded that nearly all allegations turned out to be clerical errors or mistakes, not fraud.
- A 2009 analysis examined 12 states and found that fraud by voters was “very rare,” and also concluded that many of the cases that garnered media attention were ultimately unsubstantiated

Presbyterian Historical Steps

- John Calvin concluded the Institutes in Book IV in two sections on the liberty of the Christian life in the church and on liberty in the political realm. (from *Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform*)
- The 1947 PCUS assembly stated its official civil rights support by condemning all organizations and individuals who aim to hinder any minorities “in the exercise of their civil rights or deny such rights on the basis of race, creed, class or color” (Minutes, PCUS, 1947, Part I, p. 164).
- Two years later, the General Assembly received and sent down to lower judicatories the report, “States’ Rights and Human Rights.” The paper was not proposed for adoption because of its controversial character, but it was commended to the churches by the assembly for study because it “set forth with great clarity problems in the field of civil rights ... and points up with equal clarity our responsibilities” (Minutes, PCUS, 1949, Part I, p. 100).

- In 1953, the individual's Christian political duty was affirmed as part of our responsibilities to our neighbors when the PCUS assembly encouraged men and women of the church to use the right to vote wisely and to work for the "same privileges for all citizens" (Minutes, PCUS, 1952, Part I, p. 93; see also Minutes, PCUSA, 1956, Part I, p. 234, and Minutes, PCUS, 1974, Part I, p. 164).
- By 1956, this was brought to a practical level, the voting arena. In the northern church, the 1956 PCUSA General Assembly called upon Christians to work to eliminate the poll tax "and other restrictions which prevent many citizens from exercising their legal rights at the polls and which affront the dignity of persons" (Minutes, PCUSA, 1956, Part I, p. 235; see also Minutes, PCUS, 1957, Part I, p. 194).
- The 171st General Assembly (1959) went on to call for measures to guarantee voting rights to all citizens of voting age and to establish the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights as a permanent agency of the U.S. government (Minutes, UPCUSA, 1959, Part I, p. 380).
- The 172nd General Assembly (1960) urged state legislatures and the United States Congress to continue to work for legislation that would effectively secure and protect the rights of all citizens to vote, regardless of race (Minutes, UPCUSA, 1960, Part I, p. 356).
- The 174th General Assembly (1962) of the UPCUSA urged federal leadership to eliminate racial restriction of voting rights by any of the states (Minutes, UPCUSA, 1962, Part I, p. 349).
- In 1965, the PCUS affirmed the historic Voting Rights Act, saying "The basic purpose of the civil rights movement should be to obtain for the Negro — and of course, for all minority groups — justice in the affairs of daily life and the right to respect as a human being under the redemptive concern of God. Jesus, by His words and life, calls us, as his followers, to support him in this struggle" (Minutes, PCUS, 1965, Part I, p. 159).
- In 1981 and 1982, the UPCUSA also supported extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and opposed the attempt to deny civil rights to new immigrants to the United States (Minutes, UPCUSA, 1981, Part I, p. 309; and Minutes, UPCUSA, 1982, Part I, p. 425).
- The 194th General Assembly (1982) of UPCUSA affirmed all efforts to include actively all citizens in the election process, including the use of bilingual ballots as mandated by the Voting Rights Acts, and declares its opposition to actions by government that have the effect of discouraging such exercise of citizen's rights (Minutes, UPCUSA, 1982, Part I, p. 425).