



KNOW YOUR VOTING RIGHTS

A Comprehensive Guide

**EMPOWERING VOTERS FOR A
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**



LEARN MORE AT
WWW.ECOAMERICA.ORG/GOTV



Table of Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	2
<u>Your Voting Rights</u>	3
<u>Prepare for Voting</u>	4
<u>Accessibility for All</u>	5
<u>Language Assistance for Voters</u>	6
<u>Young Voters</u>	7
<u>Restoration of Voting Rights</u>	8
<u>Persons Experiencing Homelessness</u>	8
<u>Understanding Voter Suppression</u>	9
<u>Deception and Intimidation</u>	10
<u>Reporting Voter Intimidation or Deception</u>	12

Protect Your Vote, Protect Our Planet!





Dear Voter,

Your voice matters. Your vote matters. In an era where every ballot has the power to shape our future, understanding and exercising your voting rights is more crucial than ever. **This guide is designed to empower you with the knowledge and resources necessary to navigate the voting process confidently and ensure your voice is heard.**

Voting is a fundamental right and a powerful tool for change. By participating in elections, you help shape the policies and leaders that will determine the trajectory of our communities and our planet. **As we face unprecedented challenges, from climate change to social justice, every vote for leaders who champion equity, climate progress, and justice is a step towards a brighter, more resilient future.**

This guide is your ally. It will help you **understand your rights, prepare for voting day, and recognize and counteract any attempts to suppress or intimidate your vote.** By staying informed, you not only protect your own voting rights but also contribute to a fair and just electoral process for all.

Remember, **your vote is your voice.** Use it to advocate for the changes you wish to see in the world. Let's make every vote count for a sustainable, equitable, and thriving future.

With determination and hope,

Blessed Tomorrow
Climate for Health
Path to Positive
ecoAmerica



Your Voting Rights

1 In the U.S. you have a right to vote if you are a citizen, at least 18 years of age on or before Election Day, a resident of the state in which you are voting, and are properly registered. If you have not yet done so, **REGISTER TO VOTE** now.

2 If you're in line when polls close, you have the right to cast your vote.

3 If you make an error on your ballot, ask for a replacement to ensure it reflects your true intentions.

4 If voting machines are down, request a paper ballot to ensure your vote is counted.

5 If you encounter any issues or questions arise about your eligibility to vote due to citizenship, criminal record, or other qualifications, immediately contact the Election Protection Hotline for support.

- English: 1-866-OUR-VOTE / 1-866-687-8683
- Spanish: 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA / 1-888-839-8682
- Arabic: 1-844-YALLA-US / 1-844-925-5287
- For Bengali, Cantonese, Hindi, Urdu, Korean, Mandarin, Tagalog, or Vietnamese: 1-888-API-VOTE / 1-888-274-8683



Prepare for Voting

- ★ **Verify Your Registration:** Check your status online at [Vote.org](https://www.vote.org).
- ★ **Locate Your Polling Place:** Identify where and when you will vote.
- ★ **Make Your Voting Plan:** Confirm how you will get there and what time the polls close. If you need a ride to the polls, Lyft is offering discounted rides on Election Day and has partnered with the NAACP for the Lyft Up Voting Access Program.
- ★ **What to Bring:** Learn what identification you'll need to bring (if any) to the polling place on Election Day. Also, consider bringing water, snacks, and other items to ensure your comfort (e.g. hat, jacket, fan, umbrella, folding chair) in case of long wait times.
- ★ **Understand Voting Options:** If you cannot vote in-person on Election Day, consider early voting or absentee vote-by-mail. Check your state's absentee or early voting processes, dates, and locations to plan accordingly. Many states offer early voting, allowing you to vote in person before Election Day. This can be a convenient option if you want to avoid crowds or have scheduling conflicts.
- ★ **Know What's on Your Ballot:** Familiarize yourself with the candidates, their platforms, and the measures up for vote at [Vote411.org](https://www.vote411.org).
- ★ **Share Your Plans:** Tell your friends and family what you learned in the process of making your voting plan and encourage them to make their own. Then, cast your ballot and let your voice be heard!

Accessibility for All

- ★ **Voters with Disabilities:** Federal laws ensure that all polling places are accessible and equipped with at least one voting system that allows voters with disabilities to vote independently and privately.
- ★ **In-Person Assistance:** You are entitled to receive help from a person of your choice at the polls, provided they are not your employer or affiliated with your employer or union.
- ★ **Curbside Assistance:** If access to your polling place is impeded, request curbside voting and report any issues to the Election Protection Hotline.
- ★ **Communicate Your Needs:** Inform election officials of your specific needs to ensure a comfortable voting experience. For example, if it's hard for you to stand, they should provide you with a chair or a place to sit while you wait. If the crowds or noise are hard for you, election officials can find a quiet place for you to wait and notify you when it's your turn to vote.
- ★ **Resources for Voters With Disabilities:**
 - Find out more at [Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law](#).
 - For a toolkit on voting with a disability, visit the [Autistic Self Advocacy Network](#).
 - For voting information in American Sign Language, visit [SignVote](#).
 - Visit [SABE's GoVoter Project](#) for accessible trainings on how to exercise your rights as a voter with a disability.
 - Take a course on polling place accessibility requirements at the [Rocky Mountain ADA Center](#).



Language Assistance for Voters

- ★ **Federal Rights:** Voters who are not proficient in English are entitled to receive in-person assistance at the polls from a person of their choice, as long as that individual is not their employer or an agent of their employer or union.
- ★ **Section 203 Compliance:** Under the Voting Rights Act, certain counties are mandated to provide bilingual assistance and election materials in languages specified by the U.S. Department of Justice to accommodate diverse linguistic populations.
- ★ **Hotlines for Language Help:** Voters needing assistance in languages other than English can contact the Election Protection Hotline, which supports multiple languages to ensure all voters can participate fully in the electoral process.
- ★ **Additional Resources for Language Assistance:**
 - [VotoLatino.org](https://www.votolatino.org) is focused on educating and empowering a new generation of Latino voters, as well as creating a more robust and inclusive democracy.
 - [Turbovote.org](https://www.turbovote.org) offers similar tools to Vote.org, including services in Spanish to help voters register, understand their voting options, and prepare for Election Day.
 - For comprehensive guidance on bilingual voting rights and resources, visit [Asian Americans Advancing Justice](https://www.asianamericansadvancingjustice.org), for detailed information and support for voters from Asian and Pacific Islander communities, along with other language groups.



Young Voters

- ★ **Voting Rights:** Some states allow 17-year-olds to vote in primary elections if they will be 18 by the time of the general election.
- ★ **Pre-registration:** Many states offer pre-registration for young voters, allowing individuals as young as 16 or 17 to register to vote so they are automatically eligible to vote when they turn 18. Check your state's specific pre-registration rules to ensure you are ready to participate as soon as you reach voting age.
- ★ **For more information, visit the following resources:**
 - Visit the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) for detailed information on pre-registration for young voters across states.
 - Pre-register to vote with [Turbovote](#) or [Rock the Vote](#), which provides essential information on how pre-registration operates in your state.
 - If you're a student from out of state, determine whether to vote in your home state or at your campus address. The [Campus Vote Project](#) offers detailed guides for each state, helping you navigate the rules.
 - Update your voter registration if you've moved, even within the same state, using the easy online tool provided by the [National Association of Secretaries of State](#).

Restoration of Voting Rights

- ★ **Eligibility Tools:** For returning or currently incarcerated citizens with a felony conviction, use the Campaign Legal Center's [Restore Your Vote](#) tool to check your eligibility. This resource provides clear guidance on understanding and potentially restoring your voting rights. For assistance, call 1-888-306-8683 or email RestoreYourVote@campaignlegal.org.
- ★ **Additional Resources:** The Brennan Center for Justice offers a comprehensive [map summarizing state laws on criminal disenfranchisement](#). This resource details how these laws impact millions of Americans and vary across the country, potentially affecting your ability to vote.

Persons Experiencing Homelessness

- ★ **Voting Rights:** Persons experiencing homelessness can register and vote in all 50 states. It is recommended that unhoused registrants list a shelter address as their voting address where they can receive mail. Most states have some duration of residency requirements for voter registration, such as having resided for 30 days or more before Election Day in the state or county.
- ★ **Resources for Voters Experiencing Homelessness:**
 - Visit [Nonprofit Vote](#) for information on how persons experiencing homelessness can register and vote, including tips on using shelter addresses and understanding state-specific residency requirements.
 - The [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#) offers a [Toolkit to Ensure People Experiencing Homelessness Can Exercise Their Right to Vote](#), which includes strategies for overcoming common barriers to voting and practical advice on navigating the registration process.

Understanding Voter Suppression

Since 2020, over 500 voter suppression bills have been introduced across various state legislatures **imposing strict voter ID laws, reducing early and mail-in voting opportunities, and mandating fees for the restoration of voting rights for formerly incarcerated individuals that disproportionately impact communities of color and young voters.**

These measures tend to result in **fewer polling locations and longer voting lines, and are often coupled with systematic disenfranchisement through voter roll purges, malfunctioning voting machines, and delayed poll openings, all of which serve as barriers to voting.** Staying informed about state-specific voting laws, planning ahead, and supporting advocacy efforts for voting rights helps to ensure you and every eligible voter can participate freely and fairly in the democratic process.

How to Help Stop Voter Suppression?

- ★ Know your rights and educate others.
- ★ Report voter suppression when you see it by calling the Election Protection Hotline at 1-866-OUR-VOTE / 1-866-687-8683.
- ★ Become a poll worker by visiting [Power the Polls](#).
- ★ Consider serving (*where applicable*) as a [poll watcher](#), to observe and monitor the election.



Deception and Intimidation

Deceptive and intimidating tactics have historically been used to suppress votes, often targeting low-income, Black, immigrant, and other marginalized communities.

Common Deception Tactics:

- ★ Distributing flyers with incorrect election rules or dates.
- ★ Spreading misleading messages through social media, websites, and fake news platforms.
- ★ Making "robocalls" that deliver false information to voters.
- ★ For more information, view the report, ["Deceptive Election Practices and Voter Intimidation: The Need for Voter Protection"](#).

The Impact of Artificial Intelligence

The advancement of [artificial intelligence](#) poses a risk of enhancing the quality and scale of deceptive tactics. AI technology has demonstrated capabilities for convincingly mimicking the appearance and voice of political figures to spread misinformation.



Intimidation Methods:

Intimidation tactics aim to scare voters or coerce them into not participating. Documented tactics include:

- ★ Promoting unfounded threats of legal consequences, such as arrest or deportation, to deter eligible voters from participating.
- ★ Claiming that voting by mail compromises personal data, falsely alleging it could lead to police or debt collectors accessing personal information.
- ★ Conducting door-to-door inquiries by individuals who may use intimidation, such as questioning voters about their choices or taking photos of their homes.
- ★ Monitoring drop boxes by individuals in military attire, who may film or photograph voters and their vehicles.
- ★ Aggressively questioning voters about their citizenship, criminal record, or other qualifications to vote.
- ★ Falsely representing oneself as an elections official.
- ★ Learn more about how to respond to voter intimidation at [Democracy Docket](#).



If You Experience or Witness Voter Intimidation or Deception

- ★ If you fear imminent violence, call 9-1-1.
- ★ Notify your local election official at your polling place. Document what you saw or experienced: what happened, where, and when, and whether any voters were deterred from voting.
- ★ Call Election Protection at 1-866-OUR-VOTE / 1-866-687-8683.

Exercising your right to vote is fundamental to democracy. This guide equips you to actively engage in elections, emphasizing the crucial link between voting rights and our shared vision for a fairer, healthier world. By staying informed and prepared, you can overcome voter suppression, tackle electoral challenges, and ensure your voice contributes to policies that protect our environment and foster equity.

Understand Your Rights and Take Action!



ecoAmerica is a non-partisan, 501c3 non-profit organization. We do not endorse or oppose any candidates for public office. This information and tool is provided to empower individuals to make informed decisions based on their climate values.