



***YOU HAVE
THE RIGHT
TO VOTE!***

Student Voting Information

Prepared by the Office of
Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge



A decorative banner at the top of the page featuring a stylized American flag with stars and stripes in blue, red, and white. The text "Table of Contents" is written in a white, italicized font across the banner.

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Dear Student Leader,

Members of Congress are working tirelessly to ensure your constitutional right to vote is protected. The Congressional Black Caucus recently launched the “For the People” Voter Protection Initiative, H. Res. 542. H Res. 542 has the unanimous support of the Democratic Members of the Congressional Black Caucus. It condemns the passage of state legislation that strips away the rights of the American people to vote.

Earlier this year, H.R. 5799, the Voter Empowerment Act of 2012 was introduced. This is a comprehensive bill, which aims to modernize our voter registration system, ensure equal access to the ballot box, and prohibit deceptive practices that keep people from exercising their constitutional right to vote.

It is my hope that this toolkit provides you with the resources you need to understand recently changed voting laws and inspires you to exercise your right to vote.

Sincerely,
Marcia L. Judge

The Right to Vote is Yours

On August 6, 1965, The Voting Rights Act was signed into law to enforce the 15th amendment by abolishing voting obstacles, such as poll taxes, literacy tests and other restrictions denying Americans their right to vote. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 changed the relationship between the Federal and state governments in the area of voting by forcing states that historically disenfranchised voters to receive approval of the U.S. Attorney General when changes had been made to their voting practices and procedures. Since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, individuals and organizations have worked to encourage citizens to exercise their right to vote. However, there are current efforts to cut back on the progress that has been made.

At least 180 restrictive bills have been introduced since the beginning of 2011 in 41 states. 27 restrictive bills are currently pending in 6 states. 25 laws and 2 executive actions have been passed since the beginning of 2011 in 19 states. The states that have already cut back on voting rights make up 218 electoral votes. Voting restrictions from 19 laws and executive actions have been cleared and are already in effect in 14 states.

Before the 2006 elections, no state had voter identification laws, either to register to vote or to vote at the polls on Election Day. At least 12 states have introduced laws that would require proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate, to register to vote or to cast a ballot. Additionally, at least 13 states have introduced bills to end Election Day and same-day voter registration, limit voter registration mobilization efforts, and reduce other registration opportunities.

Why Does It Matter

- Restrictive voting laws could make it significantly harder for more than five million eligible voters to cast ballots in 2012.
- 1.2 million eligible African American voters and 500,000 eligible Hispanic voters in the nation live more than 10 miles from their nearest ID-issuing office.
- Not only are minority voters less likely to possess photo ID, but they are also more likely than white voters to be selectively asked for ID at the polls.
- Across the US, more than 5 million Americans are denied the right to vote on grounds that they were convicted of a felony, 4 million of whom have fully completed their sentence and almost half of whom are African American or Hispanic.
- Felony disenfranchisement disproportionately affects African American and particularly African American males. As a result, an estimated 13% of African American males are unable to vote.
- Three out of 10 African-American men will lose the right to vote at some point in their lifetime.

What to Know as a Voter and Leader

Confirm you are properly registered to vote

After you have registered to vote, confirm you are properly registered. In many states, voter rolls are being purged. Confirm that your local Board of Elections has your correct address. If you have a question or problem, call the non-partisan Election Protection Hotline at 1-866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683). Trained legal volunteers are ready to assist you.

Know the law

After you confirm that you are properly registered to vote, you need to know the voting laws in your state. Voting laws have changed. Past laws and policies may have changed. During the recent election cycle, nine states have passed laws requiring voters to provide a photo ID in order to vote. In the “Resources and Social Media” section of this document, there are links to the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights under the Law’s Map of Shame and the Brennan Center for Justice’s Voting Laws Map. These maps detail the various voting laws in all fifty states.

Know where to vote

Based on the address you provided when you registered to vote, the Board of Elections assigns you a voting precinct. In addition to the assigned voting precinct, your community may have a general voting location, such as a courthouse, on Election Day. Call your local Board of Elections if do not know your assigned voting location.

Know your options for convenient voting

Most communities have early and absentee voting options. In some states, such as Ohio, the early and absentee voting time periods have changed. Call your local Board of Elections for more details.

Find out the type of identification you need to vote

The Map of Shame - www.mapofshame.com - will provide you with the documentation you need to vote in your state. The Election Protection Smartphone app also will help answer any questions for your polling place requirements.

If you have a question or problem, call the non-partisan Election Protection Hotline at 1-866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683). Trained Legal Volunteers are ready to assist you.

- Election Protection Voter Hotline: **1-866-OUR-VOTE**
- Download Voter ID Toolkits at:
www.866OurVote.org/pages/voter-id-toolkits
- Election Protection Website: **www.866OurVote.org**
- Find Brennan Center for Justice Voting Page for Students at:
http://www.brennancenter.org/content/student_voting/
- Find the Lawyers' Committee Map of Shame at:
www.mapofshame.com
- Visit Campus Vote Project at:
<http://www.campusvoteproject.org/sites/default/files/webfm/pdfs/Full.pdf>
- The Election Protection Smartphone App:
Download the Election Protection smartphone app visiting app.866OurVote.org from your smartphone or scan the QR code below.

