

Election Protection Guide

October 7, 2026

This guide includes nonpartisan talking points to use when speaking with your community and resources on how you can help combat mis-/disinformation and protect our elections.

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Talking Points

Defending the Vote:

- Democracy works when everyone can participate, and every eligible voter can cast a ballot that counts.
- Across the country, some leaders are working to undermine trust in our elections, weaken voting rights, and make it harder for people to have their voices heard.
- When our elections are under threat, we have a collective duty to step up, protect the vote, and make sure every ballot is safely counted.
- We won't accept barriers rooted in confusion, fear, or misinformation — or rules that make voting harder for people who work long hours, live far from polling places, have disabilities, or face paperwork hurdles.
- Our message is simple: more participation strengthens our communities — and our voices matter.
- In America, the people choose their leaders. Leaders do not get to choose who votes, whose voices count, or what future our communities deserve.

Election Process:

- The U.S. Constitution gives states the power to run the voting process.
- Our elections are run by state and local election officials who know their communities and voters' needs best.
- State and local election officials' positions are nonpartisan to ensure fair and impartial election processes.

- Each state has either a chief election official or a statewide board of elections in charge of elections for the whole state.
 - [Click here](#) to find out who runs elections at the state level in your state.
- Local election officials are tasked with preparing ballots, educating voters, managing in-person polling locations, certifying results, and more.
 - [Click here](#) to find out who your local election officials are.
- Election Hero Day is a nonpartisan, national celebration recognizing the tremendous contributions that election officials, their staff, and poll workers make to ensure a safe, secure voting experience for all Americans.
 - [Click here](#) to learn more about how you can celebrate election workers on October 20, 2026.

See more from National Voter Education Week: [Understand the Process](#).

Mail Voting:

- Mail voting is safe and secure. States have overlapping systems in place to protect the security of mail voting.
- There are lots of reasons why millions of voters can't vote in person on Election Day. Whether a voter has a disability, lives in a remote area, has a demanding job or caregiving obligations, is in the military, in the hospital, or is traveling, mail voting gives Americans of all backgrounds a way of casting a ballot that is convenient and safe.
- Your state and local election officials are the best source for truthful information about mail voting. Check with them for the deadlines in your state and more details on how mail voting works where you live.
 - [Click here](#) to find your state election office. [Click here](#) to find your local election office.
- If you vote by mail, return your ballot early, at least one week before Election Day. State election officials will make sure your vote is counted.
 - Most states allow you to track your ballot online. [Click here](#) to find information on ballot tracking in your state.
- **If someone asks about the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) and mail-in ballots:**
 - **Share the current status.** On September 14, 2026, the U.S. Supreme Court blocked the U.S. Postal Service from putting new restrictions on mail voting for the November 2026 election.
 - **Be clear about motivations.** The administration's attempts to restrict mail voting are part of a larger strategy to make voting harder.

- **Reaffirm that mail voting is safe and secure.**
- **Encourage them to learn about mail voting options in their state.**

See more from the States United Democracy Center: [*Sharing the Facts About Mail Voting.*](#)

Election Results:

- Election Day is the deadline for voting, not for counting or declaring a winner.
- States are in charge of counting the votes. State election officials will make sure that every eligible vote is counted before they announce a winner.
- Election officials will count every legal vote — accurately, fairly, and as quickly as possible. Only then will we know the result.
- It may take several days — or even weeks — to get final results, especially in close races. And some races will go to recounts, a process by which votes are recounted and rechecked. That's normal. It's a sign the system is working, and that election officials are focused on making sure every vote is counted and that the results are accurate.
- When it's time to declare a winner, state and local election officials are the best source for accurate information.
 - [Click here](#) to find your state election office. [Click here](#) to find your local election office.

See more from the States United Democracy Center: [*Sharing the Facts About Finalizing Election Results.*](#)

False Claims of Noncitizen Voting:

- Only U.S. citizens can vote in state and federal elections.
- Our election security systems include multiple safeguards to stop noncitizens from voting.
- Election officials in every state regularly work to ensure voter rolls are accurate and up to date.
- There is no accurate and trustworthy data that backs up claims of widespread noncitizen voting. This is not a problem that exists in America.
- The Trump administration is making unfounded claims to intimidate voters and reduce trust in the elections.
- Any effort to add barriers to voting is an effort to silence you.
- The real threat is disenfranchising eligible American voters.

See more from the Fair Elections Center: [Voting By Noncitizens Is a Non-Issue](#); Voting Rights Lab: [The Truth About False Claims of Noncitizen Voting](#); and States United Democracy Center: [What's Breaking Through About False Claims of Noncitizen Voting](#).

Resources

Combatting Election Mis-/Disinformation

Mis- and disinformation are widespread in elections, especially during federal election cycles. Misinformation may consist of false rumors and misconceptions about elections, while disinformation could be targeted messages spread to purposely mislead voters.

1. First, learn how you can spot mis-/disinformation.
 - Detecting Disinformation guide: guides.vote/detecting-disinformation
 - How to Detect and Guard Against Deceptive AI-Generated Election Information: www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/how-detect-and-guard-against-deceptive-ai-generated-election-information
 - "Is That Actually True?" printable flyer: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FLgvAeofhADvHpgmUJ8ztjHzyQkzBieR/view>
2. Use only trusted sources to fact-check claims about elections. A few are listed below. Remember, your [state](#) and [local](#) election offices are the best source for truthful information about your state's voting process and election results.
 - Common Cause: www.commoncause.org/actions/verify-election-information
 - FactCheck.org: www.factcheck.org
 - PolitiFact: www.politifact.com
 - Snopes: www.snopes.com
3. If you see false information on social media, report the content to the platform. Never repeat or repost it.
 - [Learn more](#) about how to talk to friends and family who share misinformation.
4. If you realize that you shared false information, delete the post and correct it publicly. Clearly identify what was wrong and direct people to trusted information.

Election Protection

Wondering how you can help protect elections? Start with [Democracy Forward's toolkit](#).

Save the [Election Protection](#) hotline: 866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683) as a contact in your phone. If your voting rights are challenged at the polls, document and report the problem. Call the Election Protection hotline as soon as you experience an issue.

- Spanish/English: 888-VE-Y-VOTA (888-839-8682)
- Asian Languages/English: 888-API-VOTE (888-274-8683)
 - Bilingual services are available in English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, and Bengali.
- Arabic/English: 844-YALLA-US (844-925-5287)

If you suspect you are seeing a federal agent at the polls, call the Election Protection hotline: 866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683). Do not escalate the situation by confronting the person and do not post about your suspicions on social media. If there are verified instances of federal activity at the polling places, voting rights advocates and other trusted messengers will share online in a safe way. You can help fight the spread of misinformation by calling the Election Protection hotline.

Learn more from the Southern Poverty Law Center: [Vote Free from Fear](#) and the American Civil Liberties Union: [Know Your Rights: Federal Agents at the Polls](#).

Know Your Rights:

- “Your Rights at the Polls” printable flyer:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/10sGD3UX8-K5L_UXvyAZdcSdLNGHPA1G/view
- “Voters’ Bill of Rights” printable flyer (English/Spanish):
https://naleo.org/COMMS/CE/Voters_Bill_of_Rights.pdf
- ACLU Know Your Rights: www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/voting-rights
- Black Voters’ Survival Guide: https://866ourvote.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/ElectionProtection_BlackVotersSurvivalGuide_2026.pdf
- Asian & Pacific Islander American (APIA) Vote Know Your Rights:
www.apiavote.org/how-to-vote/your-voting-rights