



VOTER ID: EASY TO VOTE AND HARD TO CHEAT

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Voter identification (ID) is fundamental to achieving the goal of free and fair elections, where every eligible voter is allowed to cast one vote, one time, that is counted once.

Voting is sacred in this country, and simply proving you are who you say you are before you cast a vote protects everyone, ensuring that every legally cast vote is counted once. Recent polling shows [80 percent](#) of Americans support voter ID in some form. This is a clear indication that despite politicized and dishonest rhetoric, a vast majority of the American people view this as a simple, commonsense tool to ensure fairness in our elections.

Because of these plain realities, voter ID has become the most popular election reform enacted by states since the 2020 general election. In fact, during the 2021 legislative session, of the [28](#) bills passed in state legislatures, at least seven included provisions strengthening voter identification requirements. This issue is wildly popular with conservatives and liberals, and [recent](#) polls prove Americans want voter ID laws on the books that make it easy to vote and hard to cheat.

Opponents of voter identification mainly make two incorrect claims:

- 1) Those lower on the socioeconomic scale simply cannot obtain forms of government identification; and
- 2) Requiring people to obtain one is a form of “voter suppression.”

These claims are entirely false, and the facts prove it.

To the first false claim, one recent law, [GA SB 202](#), has become a source of national debate, partially because of new voter identification provisions when requesting an absentee ballot (Georgia already requires voter ID for in-person voting). These wrongheaded critics refuse to say that Georgia and five other states currently offer voter IDs [free of charge](#) to those eligible to vote. South Carolina and North Dakota provide free state IDs to all residents, and a handful of other states offer free IDs to low-income and senior residents.

Offering this free service to eligible residents provides a way for less-advantaged communities to easily participate in state and federal elections while bolstering the integrity and confidence in the outcomes of these races. The American people understand that most citizens have or can easily obtain a government-issued identification, and it is needed to cash checks at banks, buy alcohol, board airplanes, and accomplish many other things in daily life.

Eighty-five percent of Americans say voter ID requirements are “[common sense](#),” and 72 percent of the public say voter ID requirements increase their confidence in our elections.

To the second false claim, many have tried to dishonestly, dangerously, and destructively mischaracterize voter ID as a form of “voter suppression.” However, Harvard researchers recently published a paper in the [National Bureau of Economic Research](#) proving there was no adverse effect on voter turnout or registration after implementing voter ID requirements.

These researchers also found another positive by-product regarding the implementation of voter identification laws, preventing fraud. Using elections between 2008 and 2018, the Harvard researchers used publicly available databases on documented fraud instances such as the [Heritage Foundation](#) and noted that voter ID laws could act as a deterrent to fraud.

The Supreme Court of the United States agreed. In 2005, Indiana passed a law requiring all in-person voters to present a government-issued ID or otherwise cast a provisional ballot, whereafter they must provide proof of identity for the ballot to count. In *Crawford v. Marion County Election Board*, the Court’s majority opinion found the use of a photo ID was in the state’s legitimate self-interest to preserving voter confidence, and that because it was exceedingly rare for residents not to have an ID, the effect on unduly burdening the voter was negligent. Voter ID requirements acted as an alternative to harsh criminal penalties imposed as a deterrent.

Simply put: Voter ID does not prevent voting; it is a tool to prevent voter fraud.

As outlined in the United States Constitution, individual state legislatures have the right and responsibility to run their elections. Putting voter ID laws in place is widely understood to be a commonsense safeguard against voter fraud that is easily implementable across the country.

With thousands of [documented](#) cases of election fraud in this country spanning decades, the refusal to take steps necessary to avoid these risks only increases the chance that fraud will continue to exist, disenfranchising constituents of a locality, state, or Nation as a whole. When polls show a majority of voters ([56 percent](#)) believe that at least one of the last two elections resulted in the [wrong](#) person being named president, it is clear there is a massive lack of confidence in the process.

While many states have taken significant steps to improve the security of our elections through voter ID requirements since the 2020 general election, swift adoption of strict ID laws in every state is vital to deterring fraud and catching those who commit fraud. These provisions have shown to be constitutional and inclusive for all eligible voters without suppressing the voice of minority and disadvantaged voters. They have also been very accepting and popular among all voters who want to see free and fair elections.

To ensure this, however, states should make obtaining an ID affordable without compromising the verification process of citizens' residence or citizenship status. However, it is vital that any form of identification used to vote be issued by the government and indicate state residence. College IDs and other forms are insufficient at indicating where someone may be registered or even if they are eligible to vote based on citizenship status. The implementation of voter ID requirements are not inhumane or attempts at discrimination but instead are an enforcement mechanism of pre-existing law and meant to enfranchise those for whom our elections were intended: American citizens.

In summary America First Policy Institute believes that voter ID should be implemented as a primary tool to stop voter fraud, whether in mail ballots, provisional voting, early voting, or in-person voting. And 80 percent of Americans agree with our position because it is common sense.