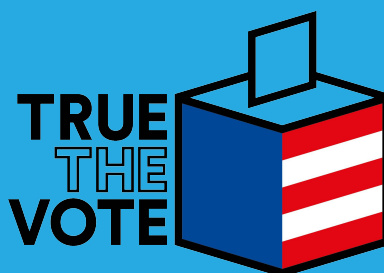




# ELECTION *integrity:*

A CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO ENSURING HONEST ELECTIONS



# OVERVIEW

*"If our elections are not truly fair, we are not truly free."  
- Catherine Engelbrecht, TRUE the VOTE Founder*

What is election integrity? Why is it important? How can citizens get involved in safeguarding the integrity of our electoral process?

All Americans can agree that voting is a precious right and that free and fair elections are essential to the integrity of our system of democratically elected representation.

As American citizens, we share a civic responsibility to participate in this essential foundation of self-government, not just by voting, but by engaging in every stage of the electoral process to ensure that our elections are administered fairly and we can have confidence that election results are true.

This guide will help you understand election integrity; give you an overview of the electoral process, election administration, and election laws; describe ways that voter fraud can corrupt elections; and outline how citizens like YOU can get involved in the process to help ensure honest, free and fair elections in your communities.



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

Election Administration .....	5
-------------------------------	---

## ELECTION LAWS IN THE UNITED STATES

Voting Rights Act .....	7
National Voter Registration Act.....	8
Help America Vote Act.....	9
State Election Laws .....	10

## VOTER FRAUD..... 11

## GETTING INVOLVED IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

The Power of Citizen Engagement .....	14
Elections.....	15
Working at the Polls.....	15
Election Workers.....	15
Poll Watchers.....	16
Poll Challengers .....	16

## ORGANIZING AN ELECTION INTEGRITY TEAM ..... 17

Election Integrity Timeline.....	17
----------------------------------	----

## VERIFYING VOTER ROLLS ..... 21

Voter Registry Research .....	21
Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck Program .....	22

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION ..... 23

## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES ..... 25



# AN INTRODUCTION TO ELECTION INTEGRITY AND THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

*"As Americans, our most precious civil right is our right to vote and to have our vote count. All of our other constitutional rights depend on this."*

*– The American Civil Rights Union*

Elections are the cornerstone of American Constitutional Democracy. If the accuracy and integrity of our elections are compromised, it undermines the legitimacy of our entire system of representative government.

## **Ensuring the Integrity of the Electoral Process**

What is election integrity? Who is responsible for administering elections and ensuring the integrity of each step in the electoral process? What laws govern voting and election procedures? How does voter fraud impact elections?

## **ELECTION INTEGRITY**

**Election integrity** encompasses accuracy and security in each step of the electoral process, from voter registration and voter roll maintenance, to casting ballots in person and by mail, to counting votes.

Properly administered elections ensure that all eligible voters, and only eligible voters, are able to cast one vote for the candidates of their choice; and that all legal votes, and only legal votes, are counted.

The integrity of our elections is protected by election laws and processes that make it easy to vote and hard to cheat, by election administrators who fairly and transparently implement those laws and processes, and by citizens engaged in election processes to ensure they are conducted freely and fairly according to law.

## **Easy to Vote, Hard To Cheat**



Free and fair elections don't happen by accident. There is a natural tension in the election process between access and integrity.

Lawmakers and election administrators are constantly working to balance rules and procedures that make it easy for eligible voters to access the voting process, with safeguards that secure the voting process and ensure that only eligible voters participate in our elections.

Let's look at all the steps involved in the election administration process and the laws that govern voting and elections.



# ELECTION ADMINISTRATION



*"The United States runs its elections unlike any other country in the world. Responsibility for elections is entrusted to local officials in approximately 8,000 different jurisdictions."*

- *The American Voting Experience: Report and Recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration*  
<https://www.supportthevoter.gov/files/2014/01/Amer-Voting-Exper-final-draft-01-09-14-508.pdf>

Who are the people that run our elections, and what do they do? According to the [Election Administration Research Center](#):

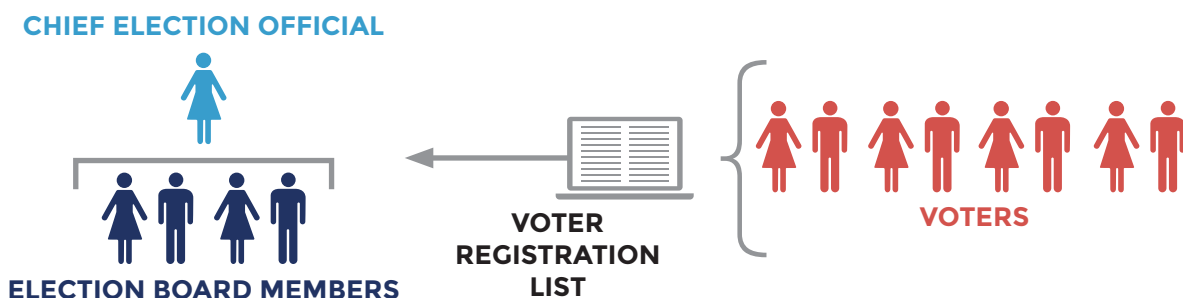
***Election administration** involves the facilitation of voting and the management of elections at all levels, from local to federal. It includes the organization of election agencies, the behavior and characteristics of state and local election officials, the process of conducting elections, and the implementation of election policies. Election administration at the local level includes running elections on Election Day, as well as all pre and post-election activities, such as maintaining voter registration lists, drawing precincts, selecting polling place sites, procuring equipment, recruiting and training poll workers, canvassing the vote, and evaluating and implementing improvements to the process itself.*

*On the state level, election administration ranges from the maintenance of the state-wide voter registration file and the implementation of federal and state laws and policies concerning elections, to the preparation and printing of the Voter Information Guide or Ballot Pamphlet for state-wide offices and initiatives.*

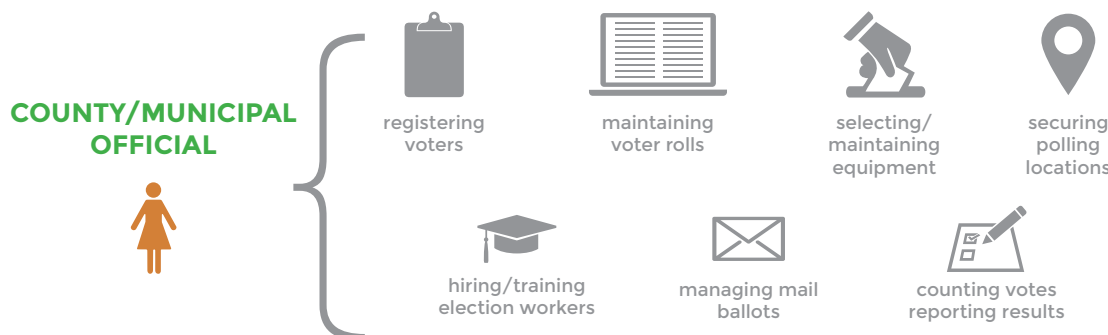
<http://earc.berkeley.edu/faq.php>

Thousands of elected and appointed officials, along with publicly employed professionals, work as election administrators at the state and local levels.

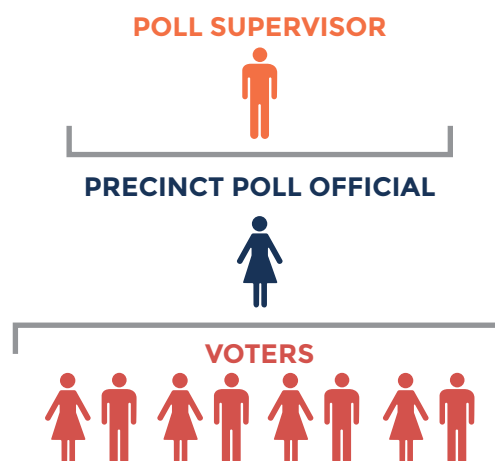
**States:** Each state has a designated **chief election official**, usually the Secretary of State or State Board of Elections head. Federal law requires each state's chief election official to maintain an electronic statewide voter registration list. The state election official, along with fellow board members and/or staff, also promulgates administrative rules for implementing state election laws. Often, the state will solicit public input on these rules – a great opportunity for citizen engagement.



**Localities:** The majority of election activities are administered at the local level, by county or municipal officials: registering voters and maintaining voter rolls, selecting and maintaining voting equipment, securing polling locations, hiring and training election workers, managing mail ballots, counting votes and reporting the results, and more. Whether elected or appointed, local election officials are governed by state (and federal) laws; but they are accountable first and foremost to local voters. These officials are also the people that citizens who want to be involved in the process of ensuring election integrity will most often work with, so get to know your local election administrators.



**Precincts:** At the most local level – the precinct – poll supervisors who manage the election process at precinct polling locations may be elected by local voters or appointed by local election administrators. One of the most important things you can do to ensure honest and fair elections in your community is to serve as a precinct poll official on Election Day – more about that to follow.



**Citizens:** Citizen engagement at every level and in every phase of the electoral process is key to ensuring election integrity and accountability. Free and fair elections require participation by voters like YOU – as precinct poll workers; as local mail ballot reviewers or voter registration volunteers; as state election legislation advocates; and as watchdogs observing, verifying, and documenting each of these processes.

No elections are administered at the **federal** level, but the federal [Election Assistance Commission](http://www.eac.gov/) (EAC) provides guidance and resources to state and local election administrators.

<http://www.eac.gov/>

# ELECTION LAWS



The laws governing elections and election administration are primarily state laws. However, there are a few important **federal election laws** that apply to all states.



## **Voting Rights Act (VRA) – 1965**

The Voting Rights Act of 1965, the landmark civil rights legislation enacted to enforce the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, prohibits racial discrimination in voting.

Cornell University Law School's [Legal Information Institute](#) describes the VRA as:

*an important federal civil rights law that protects minorities from discriminatory voting practices. Initially, the VRA only protected racial minorities, but in 1975, Congress extended its protections to members of “languages minorities,” including voters who speak Spanish, Native American languages, Alaskan Native languages, and Asian languages. The VRA prevents voting discrimination in several ways. It prohibits literacy tests or similar “tests or devices” as a prerequisite to voter registration, and requires jurisdictions with significant language minority populations to provide non-English ballots and oral voting instructions. The act also allows protects minorities from vote dilution. In areas with particularly bad discrimination problems, the act authorized federal examiners to directly register voters and observe polling places.*



**Cornell University**  
Law School

The heart of the VRA, [Section 2](#), “which closely followed the language of the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment,” prohibits voting qualifications, standards, practices or procedures that discriminate against minorities.

<http://www.justice.gov/crt/section-2-voting-rights-act>

You can find a history of the VRA and its amendments on the [U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division website](#).

<http://www.justice.gov/crt/history-federal-voting-rights-laws>

You can read the complete text of the current statute at [52 U.S.C.](#)

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/52/subtitle-I>





**National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) – 1993**  
Congress enacted the [National Voter Registration Act](http://www.justice.gov/crt/about-national-voter-registration-act) (also known as “Motor Voter”) to make it easier for Americans to register to vote and maintain their registration, and to encourage election integrity.  
<http://www.justice.gov/crt/about-national-voter-registration-act>

**Section 5** requires states to offer voter registration along with driver’s license applications.

**Section 6** requires states to offer voter registration by mail.

**Section 7** requires states to offer voter registration at all offices that provide public assistance

**Section 8** requires states to maintain accurate voter registration lists.

**Section 11** creates a private right of action to sue for failure to comply with the NVRA.

States with same-day registration (Idaho, Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Wyoming) or no voter registration (North Dakota) were exempted from NVRA requirements.

The National Voter Registration Act imposed sweeping changes on the conduct of American elections. These changes included significant federal mandates on state and local election officials that restricted the ability of those officials to maintain clean and accurate voter rolls while simultaneously obliging them to maintain clean and accurate voter rolls.



You can read the complete text of the statute at [42 U.S.C. 1973gg](http://www.justice.gov/crt/title-42-public-health-and-welfare-chapter-20-elective-franchise-subchapter-i-h-national-voter#anchor_1973gg).  
[http://www.justice.gov/crt/title-42-public-health-and-welfare-chapter-20-elective-franchise-subchapter-i-h-national-voter#anchor\\_1973gg](http://www.justice.gov/crt/title-42-public-health-and-welfare-chapter-20-elective-franchise-subchapter-i-h-national-voter#anchor_1973gg)





### **Help America Vote Act (HAVA) – 2002**

The [Help America Vote Act](#) was enacted largely in response to problems encountered in the 2000 General Election.

- ▶ HAVA created a new federal agency, the Election Assistance Commission, to serve as a clearinghouse for election administration information.
- ▶ It provided funds to states to improve election administration and replace outdated voting systems.
- ▶ It created minimum standards for states to follow in several key areas of election administration, including voter roll maintenance.
- ▶ It allowed for provisional ballots, which are used to record a vote when there is some question regarding a voter's eligibility.

<http://www.justice.gov/crt/help-america-vote-act-2002>

HAVA's requirement that all states establish a statewide electronic voter database and ensure that voter registration records "are accurate and are updated regularly" strengthened the election integrity provisions of the NVRA.



You can read the complete text of the statute at [42 U.S.C. 15301 to 15545](#).  
<http://www.justice.gov/crt/chapter-146-election-administration-improvement>

### **Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) – 1986**

UOCAVA, as amended by the [Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment \(MOVE\) Act](#), requires states to allow U.S. citizens and U.S. service members and their families residing outside the U.S. to vote in federal elections.

<http://www.justice.gov/crt/uniformed-and-overseas-citizens-absentee-voting-act>

[http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2011/01/06/MOVE\\_Act.pdf](http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2011/01/06/MOVE_Act.pdf)



You can read the complete text of the statute at [42 U.S.C. 1973ff](#).  
<http://www.justice.gov/crt/title-42-public-health-and-welfare-chapter-20-elective-franchise>

## STATE ELECTION LAWS

**Election laws** can vary substantially from state to state. **It's essential to understand the laws governing elections in your state**, so you can

- recognize whether or not the laws are being followed, and
- know your rights and responsibilities to engage in the electoral process and hold election officials accountable.

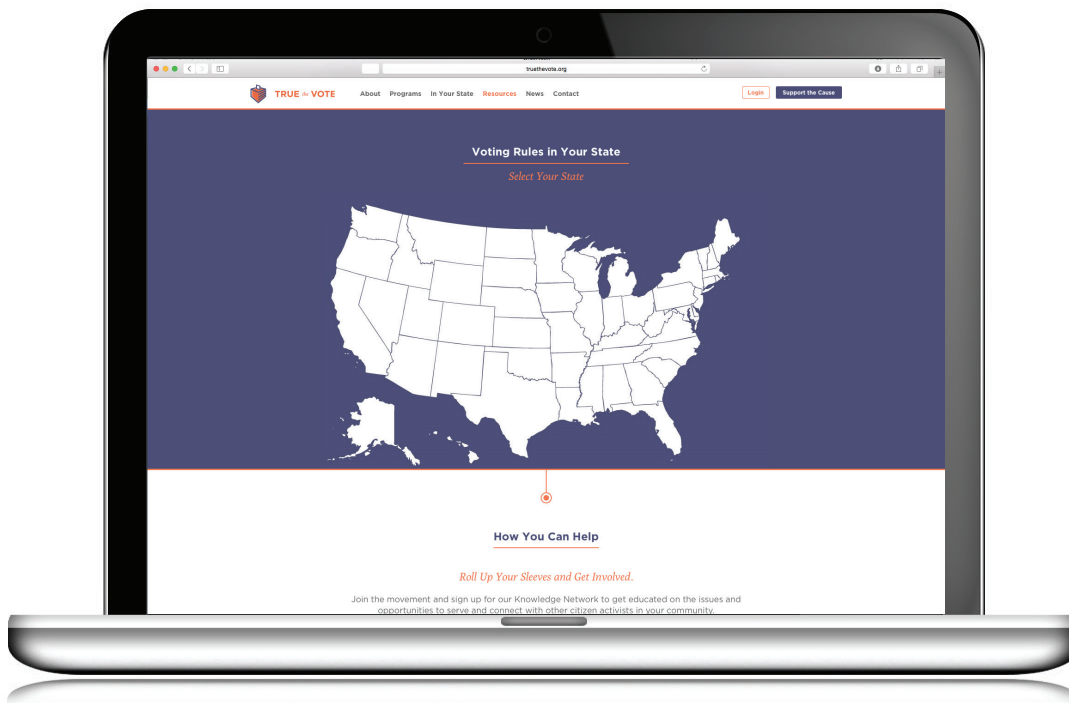
You can find links to your state's election code via TRUE the VOTE's website – go to “[In Your State](#)” and click on your state on the map.

<http://truethevote.org/resources#in-your-state>



It's also important to review your state's election laws to assess how effectively they protect the integrity of each step of the electoral process, including detecting and deterring voter fraud.

Let's look at some of the ways that voter fraud is perpetrated.



<http://truethevote.org/resources#in-your-state>

# VOTER FRAUD

*“Confidence in the integrity of our electoral processes is essential to the functioning of our participatory democracy. Voter fraud drives honest citizens out of the democratic process and breeds distrust of our government. Voters who fear their legitimate votes will be outweighed by fraudulent ones will feel disenfranchised.”*

– U.S. Supreme Court, *Purcell v. Gonzalez*, 2006  
<http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/06pdf/06A375.pdf>

What is voter fraud? Is voter fraud a real problem? Does fraud affect the outcome of elections?

**Voter fraud**, also called vote fraud or electoral/election fraud, is defined as “illegal interference with the process of an election.”

<http://definitions.uslegal.com/e/electoral-fraud/>

Voter fraud is a very real problem that is perpetrated in many forms. The Heritage Foundation report, “[Does Your Vote Count?](#)”, identifies many different types of voter fraud, including:



**False registrations** – using phony names and/or addresses or claiming residency where voters don’t live and aren’t eligible to vote



**Impersonation fraud** at the polls -- voting in the names of legitimate voters, or of voters who have moved or died but not been removed from the voter rolls



**Illegal “assistance”** and intimidation at the polls



**Ineligible voting** by noncitizens, felons, or others not eligible to vote



**Duplicate voting** in the same election in more than one jurisdiction or state



**Fraudulent use of absentee ballots**, obtained with or without voters’ knowledge, forging or coercing the votes



**Buying votes** or selling votes

[http://thf\\_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2014/pdf/Doesyourvotecount.pdf](http://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2014/pdf/Doesyourvotecount.pdf)



# Chicago Tribune

25c Saturday, December 4, 1982

## Good morning

**Hearns wins on decision**  
 Tommy Hearns beat champion Wilfred Benitez on a majority decision Friday night in the Superdome in New Orleans to win the World Boxing Council's super-welterweight title. Hearns won on the cards of two judges, while the third judge scored it an even fight in Sports.

## High school report

Area high schools were holding 11 up Friday with plenty of basketball action in Sports.

## House bill says Watt's wrong

House overwhelmingly approved \$7.4 billion money bill turning income tax brackets, and gas taxes of the central and north coasts of California. The bill also would restrict oil and mineral leases in wilderness areas, and would require the Department of Energy to study the effects of the bill on the economy. The bill was passed by a 388-1 vote.

## Thompson can cut budget

General Assembly gave Jim Thompson power to cut 2 percent from the 1983-84 state budget. Page 3.

## Milestone for heart patient

Man who got the first permanent artificial heart passes a crucial milestone. Recovery by breathing on his own, circling water. Page 4.

## Chrysler ultimatum to UAW

Chrysler told the UAW that Canadian workers must end their strike or all contract talks would be postponed 10 January, in Business.

## Weather

CHICAGO AND VICINITY: Saturday: Cloudy, high 50 degrees, light and variable winds. Sunday: High 50s, cloudy, calm to light S. Sunday: High 50s, light S. Wind and other reports in Page 15.

## Index

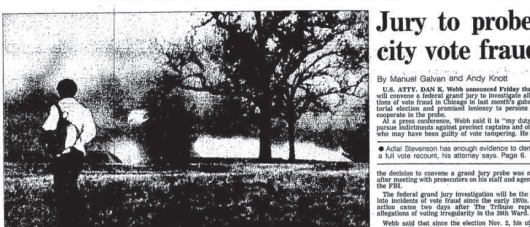
Detailed index on page 2

# Unemployment surges

## 10.8% highest since Depression; 13.2% in state

### Illinois jobless

**By Douglas Frantz**  
 THE ILLINOIS unemployment rate soared to a post-Depression record of 10.8 percent in November, leaving 120,000 people out of work. That translates to one in every 7.5 workers on the jobless rolls, the government reported Friday.  
 The figure for November was a sharp increase over the previous month's rate of 9.5 percent and 60,000 out of work.  
 Nationwide, the unemployment rate also reached a post-Depression record of 10.4 percent. There are 12 million Americans out of work.  
 Illinois ranked third among the major industrial states, behind Michigan at 11.2 percent, and Ohio at 10.2 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Labor and released by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.  
 The Illinois rate of 10.8 percent is a record since 1932, when it stood at 10.7 percent. A year earlier, the state's unemployment rate was 9.5 percent, and 100,000 workers were on the jobless rolls.  
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**In the path of a twister**  
 A man walks as a tornado approaches Little Rock, Ark., observed to be the largest and most violent in the nation. The photo was taken Thursday by Doug Frantz.

## Jury to probe city vote fraud

**By Marjorie Galt and Andy Kroll**  
 A CITY JURY is to probe whether or not it will convene a federal grand jury to investigate allegations of vote fraud in Chicago's 1982 election. The jury will be convened by the U.S. Attorney General, who is expected to announce the decision in the next few days.  
 The federal grand jury investigation will be the first in the history of the city since the 1970s. The action came two days after the Tribune reported allegations of vote fraud in the city.  
 Webb said that since the election Nov. 2, his office, and the office of the U.S. Attorney General, have received many calls from citizens who claim to have been victimized by vote fraud. Webb said it is "very difficult" to pursue indictments against precinct captains and others who may have been guilty of vote tampering. He said the decision to convene a grand jury probe was made after consulting with prosecutors on his staff and agents of the FBI.  
 Webb said that since the election Nov. 2, his office, and the office of the U.S. Attorney General, have received many calls from citizens who claim to have been victimized by vote fraud. Webb said it is "very difficult" to pursue indictments against precinct captains and others who may have been guilty of vote tampering. He said the decision to convene a grand jury probe was made after consulting with prosecutors on his staff and agents of the FBI.

## Reagan to offer Poles a deal to lift curbs

**From Chicago Times News**  
 President Reagan will offer Poles a deal to lift curbs on Polish workers and political dissidents. The deal would allow Polish workers to work in the U.S. and political dissidents to leave the country. The deal would also allow Polish workers to work in the U.S. and political dissidents to leave the country.  
 The deal would allow Polish workers to work in the U.S. and political dissidents to leave the country. The deal would also allow Polish workers to work in the U.S. and political dissidents to leave the country.  
 The deal would allow Polish workers to work in the U.S. and political dissidents to leave the country. The deal would also allow Polish workers to work in the U.S. and political dissidents to leave the country.

## Cop ticketing a train gets carried away

**By Don McIntire**  
 A CHICAGO POLICE officer who was ticketed for carrying a train into a Precinct 10 station, was charged with obstructing justice. The officer was charged with obstructing justice for carrying a train into a Precinct 10 station.  
 The officer was charged with obstructing justice for carrying a train into a Precinct 10 station. The officer was charged with obstructing justice for carrying a train into a Precinct 10 station.  
 The officer was charged with obstructing justice for carrying a train into a Precinct 10 station. The officer was charged with obstructing justice for carrying a train into a Precinct 10 station.

## Baby-sitter pleads guilty to 3 slayings

**By Don McIntire**  
 A BABY-SITTER who was charged with the slayings of three children, pleaded guilty to the slayings. The baby-sitter was charged with the slayings of three children.  
 The baby-sitter was charged with the slayings of three children. The baby-sitter was charged with the slayings of three children.  
 The baby-sitter was charged with the slayings of three children. The baby-sitter was charged with the slayings of three children.

One of the largest voter fraud prosecutions ever conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice involved 100,000 stolen votes in Chicago, Illinois, and resulted in 63 individuals being convicted of federal election crimes. Votes were stolen using multiple types of voter fraud – tactics that cheaters continue to use to steal votes and elections:

- ✓ **Preying on the Disabled and Elderly.** The evidence showed that the conspirators evaded detection by casting ballots for those persons who would be the most unlikely to challenge the theft of their franchise.
- ✓ **Impersonating Absent Voters.** The dominant form of vote fraud was accomplished with ballots cast for absent voters.
- ✓ **Registering Aliens.** Aliens who were illegally registered were another source of potential votes... U.S. Attorney Dan Webb estimated that 80,000 illegal aliens were registered to vote in Chicago. Dozens of aliens were indicted and convicted for registering and voting, and one individual was indicted for recruiting an illegal alien to register to vote.
- ✓ **False Registrations.** Another way to obtain names that could be voted on Election Day was to have people falsely register to vote in a precinct.
- ✓ **Casting Fraudulent Absentee Ballots.** Precinct captains would ask their workers "to encourage voters to apply for absentee ballots whether or not they had a valid reason to do so and to turn the blank ballots over" so that the captains could vote the ballots.

Voter fraud can, and does, affect the outcome of elections – especially local elections that are often decided by a small number of votes. In the past few years, elections have been overturned due to voter fraud in [Canton, MS](#) (4 votes); [Hattiesburg, MS](#) (37 votes); [Pembroke, NC](#) (30 votes); [Perth Amboy, NJ](#) (10 votes); and [Weslaco, TX](#) (16 votes). In [Dothan, AL](#), the girlfriend of a candidate who “won” by 14 votes was convicted of 24 counts of felony voter fraud.

Whether or not the outcome of an election is changed, voter fraud not only disenfranchises legitimate voters by canceling out their votes, but decreases public confidence in our elections and in our government – which may lead to decreased voter participation.



True the Vote’s online Voter Fraud Database includes a sampling of voter fraud cases from across the country that documents hundreds of fraud convictions representing thousands of stolen votes, as well as numerous elections that were overturned due to fraud.



Understanding how voter fraud can be committed at each stage in the electoral process will help you detect and prevent all the types of fraudulent voting that undermine the integrity of elections.





# GETTING INVOLVED IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

## THE POWER OF CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

*As the nation's largest nonpartisan, voters' rights and election integrity organization, [True the Vote](#) exists to inspire and equip volunteers for involvement at every stage of America's electoral process.*



Now that you are equipped with an understanding of the processes and procedures involved in administering elections -- the laws that govern elections, and the ways that voter fraud can undermine the integrity of our elections -- you are ready to take on the important civic responsibility of engaging in the electoral process in your community.

What can citizens do to ensure integrity in each stage of the electoral process?



**Elections** – serve as an election worker or poll watcher, organize an election integrity team, run an Election Day command center, follow up on reported irregularities



**Voter Registration** – register voters, organize voter registration drives, verify voter rolls



**Legislative Action** – research your state's election code and laws that impact election integrity, work with legislators on election reforms, advocate for laws that make voting more secure

# ELECTIONS

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## WORKING AT THE POLLS

**The single most important thing you can do** to ensure honest and fair elections in your community is to serve in an official capacity at the polls on Election Day – including during in-person [Early Voting](#) if your state offers it.

You can serve as a paid poll worker hired to administer the election process, or you can volunteer as a poll watcher appointed to observe the process.

The best way to ensure that the voting process in your community is honest and fair is to be a part of it!

As a worker in charge of administering the election process at your local polling place, you have the authority and the responsibility to ensure that all election laws and procedures are properly followed. You are in the ideal position to verify that all eligible voters, and only eligible voters, are able to cast a ballot for the candidates of their choice.

Poll workers are generally hired to serve on Election Day and paid by the local city or county official in charge of administering the election. Supervisors for each poll location may be appointed by local officials or elected. Local political parties may also participate in selecting poll supervisors/workers where a partisan balance is required by state law.

Adequate numbers of thoroughly trained poll workers are essential for well-run elections. Local officials usually provide training for poll workers that covers election laws, administrative procedures for managing a precinct polling location, and operation of voting machines and equipment if applicable.



Qualifications and training requirements for poll workers vary by state. An ability to work long hours on Election Day is definitely required, as is a commitment to serving your community.

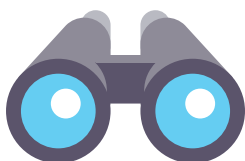
Other election worker opportunities may include serving as an early voting poll worker or as part of a mail-ballot review team.

Contact your local election administrator to find out how you can serve as an election worker. Your state election official – Secretary of State or State Board of Elections – is another good source of information.

## POLL WATCHERS

*“Transparency is the key to free and fair elections. Volunteer poll watchers serve as the eyes and ears for the candidates, parties, and voters and are essential to deterring wrongful conduct as well as maintaining public trust in our electoral process.”*

– Catherine Engelbrecht, True the Vote



Another opportunity to serve at the polls and ensure an honest and fair election process is to volunteer as a poll watcher, also called an election observer. As a poll watcher, you won't participate in the actual administration of the election; but you will be able to observe the process, document what you see, and report any problems.

Post election, you will be able to affirm public confidence in the integrity of the processes you observed or, if you see irregularities, you can use your experiences to recommend improvements to your local election administrator and state legislators.

Most states allow a candidate or political party to appoint observers to polling locations. In addition to watching the polls, you may also be able to observe mail ballot processing, ballot counting, and voting machine testing.



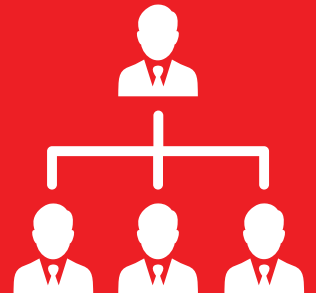
Check out TRUE the VOTE's **Poll Watcher Training** for tips on being an effective election observer. You'll also find useful links to your state's requirements, rights and responsibilities for poll watchers.

## POLL CHALLENGERS

Some states designate a separate position of poll challenger for volunteers appointed and authorized to challenge the eligibility of voters at the polls. Most poll watchers are *not* allowed to challenge or even speak to voters. Review your state's election code for rules regarding challenges, if applicable.



# ORGANIZING AN ELECTION INTEGRITY TEAM



Opportunities abound for individual citizens to engage in the election process. But what if you prefer teamwork?

If you're part of a group that is interested in free and fair elections – or you want to organize one – here are some ideas for putting together an **election integrity team** in your community.

This **Election Team Timeline** shows the activities your team will focus on during each phase of the election cycle: Planning, Mobilization, Training, Deployment, and Follow-Up.

## ★ ELECTION TEAM DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE ★

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
PLAN			Develop Relationships in your Community									
			Build your Election Team									
			Review Past Election Poll Statistics									
MOBILIZE			Recruit Poll Observer Volunteers									
				Identify Poll Locations								
TRAIN		Train for Primaries and Municipal Elections										
								Train for General Election				
DEPLOY											Finalize Command Center	
											Schedule Final Briefings	
FOLLOW-UP											Collect Incident Reports	
											Post Election Review	

Your team leader(s) will be responsible for coordinating a number of tasks to successfully achieve your team's goal of ensuring the integrity of elections in your community.



## PLANNING

- Know who works at the polls
- Know the poll landscape
- Develop relationships with local officials
- Create an election plan



## MOBILIZE

- Recruit volunteers
- Contact political parties and candidates that can appoint poll watchers



## TRAINING

- Have team members attend training offered by local election officials
- Offer team members supplemental training



## DEPLOYMENT

- Finalize Election Day (and Early Voting) Command Center plans
- Conduct pre-Election Day briefing
- Provide support to team members in the field as needed throughout Election Day



## FOLLOW-UP

- Collect incident reports
- Debrief poll workers and poll watchers
- Communicate with election officials

Keep in mind that you don't have to do everything on this list, or cover every polling location, in order for your election integrity team to be a success. Just do what you can, with the resources you have, given the opportunities available in your community. And whether you participate individually or as part of a team, serving on Election Day – at the polls or behind the scenes – is the single most important thing you can do to ensure the integrity of elections.



See TRUE the VOTE's **Election Integrity Teams Guide** to learn more about organizing an election team in your community.



But what can you do between elections? What if working at the polls isn't for you? Keep reading to find out.

# VOTER REGISTRATION



## REGISTERING VOTERS

Voter Registration is the first step to participating in the election process, and registration drives are a great way to connect with potential voters in your community and engage new voters in the process. But you don't have to limit yourself to voter registration – think voter education!

Voter registration is an 'on-the-ground' operation where you can make a difference, counter voter fraud -- and if you're part of an organization -- message to and mobilize newly empowered voters.



Registering voters also gives you an opportunity to work with elections officials in your community. It's important to know the people who maintain your voter rolls and administer your elections.

## Voter Registration

Voter registration is one of the most important tasks of election administration.

All eligible citizens have the right to register and vote. To maximize participation while protecting the integrity of the electoral system, election officials have an obligation to ensure that voter registration is easily accessible to all eligible citizens. Election officials must also maintain accurate voting lists so that only legally registered, eligible citizens vote.

Registering to vote is easy! Application forms are available at many locations – post offices, libraries, schools, government offices – or can be requested and delivered right to your mailbox. Completed applications can be submitted by mail, at driver's license offices and public assistance offices, and even online in some states.



The National Association of Secretaries of State has published links to [every state's voter registration application and/or online voter registration site](#), plus rules for conducting voter registration drives, where applicable.

<http://www.nass.org/nass-initiatives/nass-national-voter-registration-month-sept-2015/>

As easily accessible as registering is, there may be people in your community who need a bit of encouragement, assistance, or just a friendly reminder to apply for or update their voter registration. That's where volunteers like you come in. Voter registration drives are a great way for you to expand the reach of your local voter registrar, create more opportunities for your neighbors to register, and help ensure the quality of information on the applications submitted.



To learn more about voter registration and how to engage in successful efforts to register voters -- working individually or with a group -- see TRUE the VOTE's **Voter Registration Guide**.



Be sure to find out your state's rules and follow the requirements for helping voters register and hosting voter registration drives.

### Online Voter Registration and Automatic Registration



Several states have recently implemented [online voter registration](#) systems. A couple of states have adopted "automatic" voter registration, whereby people who apply for driver's licenses are automatically registered to vote at the same time. The impact these processes have on election integrity depends on the quality of the security and eligibility verification procedures employed by each state.

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/electronic-or-online-voter-registration.aspx>

### Same-Day Registration

About 20% of states currently offer [same-day registration](#), allowing residents to register and immediately be able to vote. While same-day registration is convenient for voters, it doesn't allow election officials time to verify applicants' eligibility, increasing the likelihood that ineligible people will be allowed to vote.

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/same-day-registration.aspx>

### Voter ID

If your state requires voters to present identification when voting, voter ID education is a natural addition to your voter registration activities. The [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) maintains a current listing of state voter ID laws. Keep in mind that HAVA mandates that all states require identification from first-time voters who registered to vote by mail and did not provide verification of their ID with their voter registration.

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id.aspx>

# VERIFYING VOTER ROLLS



Inaccurate voter rolls are a real threat to election integrity. Local election administrators have the primary responsibility to verify registering voters and maintain accurate voter rolls. The NVRA and HAVA give state election officials a concurrent responsibility to maintain clean statewide voter lists.

When election officials fail to keep voter rolls clean by verifying the eligibility of registrants and by removing ineligible people – for example, voters who die or move, or noncitizens who were never eligible – it creates opportunities for voter fraud, especially in states that don't require identification to vote.

What can citizens do to verify the accuracy of voter rolls in their communities and hold local officials accountable?

## Voter Registry Research



TRUE the VOTE Research takes a hands-on approach to verifying the accuracy of information used to form data sets in election processes, like voter registries and recall petitions.



TRUE the VOTE has developed online technologies so that citizens can research their own voter registries and take action to report errors. These efforts encourage our government to improve its registry management and discourage attempts by outside parties who intentionally submit fraudulent registrations and records.

In addition to our online Research program, TRUE the VOTE has developed a **Guide to Do-It-Yourself Research Projects** that includes suggestions and tips for using your state's open records laws to obtain and review voter registration records.



Check out TRUE the VOTE's **On-Demand Voter Registry Research Training** to learn how you can get involved in verifying the integrity of voter rolls in your community.

## Other DIY research projects might include:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  same-day voter registration |  mail ballot applications/return envelopes |
|  no-voter-ID affidavits      |  military ballot applications/returns      |
|  provisional ballots         |   |

# LEGISLATIVE ACTION



Another powerful way that citizens can engage in the electoral process and make a positive impact on election integrity is through legislative action – advocating for changes to your state’s election code that improve the accuracy and security of voting and election procedures.

## What are the “best” laws for protecting election integrity?

While it is up to each state to decide what election laws best suit the needs of its voters, there are best practices that states can adopt to increase the integrity of the election process.

If you want to learn more about working with your state legislature, TRUE the VOTE created a **Legislative Advocacy Toolkit** that includes online training and resources to help citizens effectively advocate for reforms that strengthen the integrity of elections.

## Election Integrity Policy Checklist



Require photo voter identification for all in-person balloting



Establish citizenship verification procedures in voter registration



Encourage states to enter into cooperative voter list maintenance agreements such as the Kansas Consortium and Pew’s ERIC program



Require absentee voters to provide voter identification numbers from state IDs, passports, etc. when submitting a ballot



Develop local voter roll maintenance procedures that check jury selection data and other sources for attestations of noncitizenship

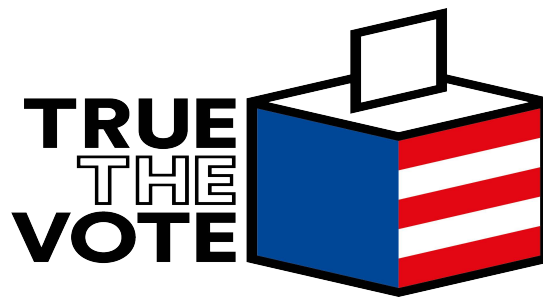
You may also discover problems that need to be addressed legislatively through your experiences participating in the electoral process – and your first-hand experience will make you an especially effective advocate for change.

As new election reforms are enacted and implemented, in the voting and registration process, the election integrity cycle begins again.

**If our elections are not truly fair, we are not truly free**

We hope this guide has underscored the importance of safeguarding the integrity of our elections, inspired you to get involved in the election process in your community, and equipped you with the information and resources you need to get started.

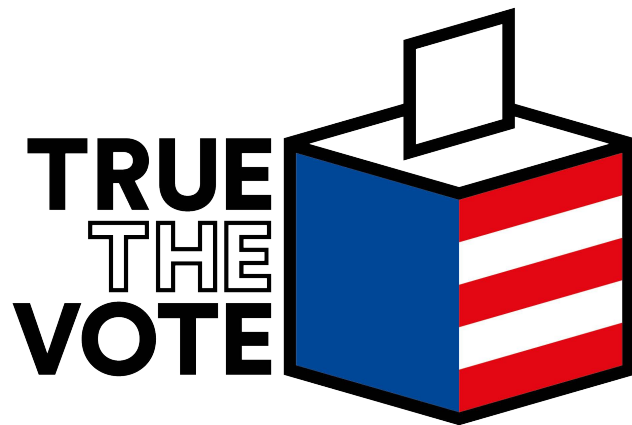
Only through the power of citizen engagement – when individuals like you get involved to protect the integrity of every phase of the process – can we ensure that our elections are truly fair and we are truly free.



# NOTES

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