



Policy Pack II.I

END VOTER SUPPRESSION

September, 2018





END VOTER SUPPRESSION

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END VOTER SUPPRESSION

Letter from the Team

There is a reason the right to vote is so hard to fight for and seldom won.

There is a reason Ancient Athens, the so-called birthplace of democracy, started using disenfranchisement as a form of punishment for crimes. There is also a reason they called disenfranchisement "civil death."

There is a reason Women's *Equality Day* marks the anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which guarantees women the right to vote. Yet, even greater, there is a reason the 19th Amendment was circumvented by poll taxes, literacy tests, grandfather clauses, residency requirements, and violent barriers that prevented women of color, immigrants, American Indian or Alaska Native people from voting.

There is a reason that the 1964 voter registration project in Mississippi was called "*Freedom Summer*."

There is a reason voting in America takes place on a workday, requiring voters to have benevolent bosses or flexible hours and benefits to make it to the polls on time.

There is a reason Dreamers are denied a pathway to citizenship and with it the right to vote.

There is a reason transgender voters are turned away at the polls if their gender identity does not match what's stated on their identification, even though they still have the right to vote.

That reason is singular and that reason is power. Voting is power and our surest way to have a voice in government—in the decisions made about our bodies, our lives, and our futures.

Too often we, our peers, and our neighbors question the purpose of voting and whether our vote can make a difference. Well, would they try to suppress the right to vote if there was no point or if it had no ability to compel change? Our elected officials serve at the will of the people who are eligible and show up to vote. In 2016 voter turnout was highest among white non-Hispanic individuals over the age of 65, resulting in a government that looks and thinks the same way as the voters who elected them into office.

That demographic has the highest turnout rate because voter suppression is still alive and well in America. Voter suppression laws and measures like cuts to early voting, voter ID laws, and purges of voter rolls all disproportionately impact Black, Latinx, American Indian or Alaska Native, low-income, and transgender voters.

Therefore, as we celebrate, organize, and mobilize for the midterms this November, remember there are far too many for whom the right to vote is inaccessible, if not denied entirely.

If you are able to vote, make a voting plan and vote. If you have a car, drive your friends to the polls. If you have flexibility in your schedule, work as a poll watcher to ensure accessibility and respect is practiced throughout. On November 6, let's elect leaders who will work to end voter suppression in every election that follows, whether it is convenient for their ballot or not.

The midterm elections are not the end, they are an opportunity. Let's not miss it.

In sisterhood and progress,
The Platform Team



END VOTER SUPPRESSION

Lingo

Absentee Voting: (no-excuse and excuse required) Ballots are cast by mail or dropped off in-person ahead of election day for individuals who cannot or choose not to vote in person on election day. In 20 states, a voter must present an excuse as to why they cannot vote in-person on election day. In 27 states and the District of Columbia there is “no-excuse absentee voting,” meaning anyone can choose to vote absentee regardless of whether or not they are able to go to the polls on election day. ¹

Accessibility: This is the concept of the world being useable and functional for all. Accessibility is not limited to just ramps in place of stairways for people who use wheelchairs, although that is an important part of being accessible. Accessibility also involves providing alternative formats for those who can not read print either from sight complications or a learning disability; edible food for those with dietary restrictions; fragrance-free environments for those who are sensitive to or become ill due to perfume and other odors; and controlling the noise level of a room so that people with hearing impairments or social anxiety can participate equally in the activities in the room. There are many more examples of what access looks like, as there are many kinds of disabilities.

Ballot: This is how votes are cast. There are different ways to do this, from hand-counted paper cards, punch cards, optical scan and electronic systems with a list of candidates to choose from and sometimes policy questions may be added. ²

Constituent: An eligible voter; anyone whose life and livelihoods are affected by government and policy; those whom elected officials are chosen to represent.

Curbside Voting: The Americans with Disabilities Act mandates polling places be accessible and jurisdictions must choose polling locations that are or can be made accessible. However, in a circumstance when such is not possible, jurisdictions may offer curbside voting, which allows someone to vote from their car or outside the polling place. This is an important accommodation, even when voting by mail is an option, because people with disabilities cannot be restricted from physically showing up to the polls on election day. ³

Early Voting: Early voting allows an individual to vote in-person at a local elections office or other designated location. Absentee voting and vote-by-mail are forms of early voting with a person mailing in or dropping off their completed ballot.

Electorate: This is the group of all people who are eligible to vote, not just those who are registered or who have cast their ballot.

Disenfranchise: To deny a person, or persons, the right to vote.

Federal Judge: A judge appointed by the President to preside over district courts, appeals courts, and the Supreme Court (highest court in the nation). All appointees will undergo hearings before taking office.

Precinct: Cities or towns are divided into voting districts, called precincts. Each precinct will have a designated polling place. Polling places can be in a school, religious building, community center; any location in your precinct where voting happens. ⁴



END VOTER SUPPRESSION

Lingo (cont'd)

Provisional Ballot: These ballots, created by the Help America Vote Act of 2002, are provided to voters whose eligibility is in question, which can for a couple of reasons. Most commonly it is due to their name not being on the registration list, or not presenting an ID when exercising the right to vote. If an individual's voter eligibility cannot be immediately established, they will cast this ballot, which will be held until after the election and until eligibility is confirmed. ⁵

Voter Suppression: Efforts to restrict, make inaccessible, or altogether prevent intended groups of people from voting. ⁶

Vote-By-Mail: Under this system, every registered voter receives a ballot in the mail, there is no need to request an absentee ballot. Voters can then return the ballot via mail. This practice only exists in Colorado, Oregon, and Washington, though voters in all three states maintain the right to vote in-person.

Voter ID Law: Some states require voters to present identification, though the type varies by state, in order to register to vote or to cast a ballot.





END VOTER SUPPRESSION

Numbers You Need to Know

As you read these numbers, please note that statistics are not facts. Statistics are evidence of problems, trends, etc. Furthermore, the identity and demographic language in each point below mirrors the language used in the reports, but do not necessarily reflect the language used by Platform. In each instance, the study's language could have inhibited respondents from being able to accurately identify as well as perpetuated harmful categorization that misrepresents reality. As this Policy Pack works to highlight, lower voter turnout among certain communities is the result of voter suppression, not a community's apathy toward civic engagement.

Disenfranchisement and the Voting-Age Population

- While youth voters, identified as ages 18-29, make up 21 percent of the eligible voter bloc, less than 50 percent voted in the 2016 election.⁷
- One in every 13 African Americans of voting age is disenfranchised. This means African Americans are deprived the right to vote at a rate more than four times higher than their non-African American peers.⁸
- In the 2017 Alabama special election, 98 percent of Black women, 93 percent of Black men, 35 percent of white women, and 27 percent of white men voted for Democrat Doug Jones (the winner).⁹
- Latinos make up more than 10 percent of the electorate in 11 states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Nevada and Texas.¹⁰
- A 2015 survey of transgender individuals, ages 18 and older, found 76 percent of U.S. citizen respondents were registered to vote in the November 2014 midterm election, 11 percentage points higher than the total U.S. population. Of the registered voters, 54 percent voted in that election, 12 percentage points higher than the total U.S. population.¹¹
- A projected 35.4 million people with disabilities were eligible to vote in the November 2016 elections. This represents close to one-sixth of the total electorate,¹² yet in the 2016 election, voter turnout among people with disabilities was 6 percentage points lower than turnout among people without disabilities.¹³
- Only about 10 percent of people experiencing homelessness vote.¹⁴
- In 2014, 30.1 percent of citizens with annual family incomes between \$10,000 to \$14,999 were reported voters compared to 56.6 percent of citizens with annual family incomes \$150,000 or higher.¹⁵
- Studies found that 70 percent of people who are registered to vote via volunteer efforts in welfare and food stamp offices will turn out on election day during a presidential year.¹⁶

The Barriers

- Unnecessary hysteria over voter fraud has created a path for greater voter restrictions. A study of 84 million votes cast in 22 states, was conducted to look for duplicate registrants. Of these, only 14 cases were flagged for prosecution. This is 0.00000017 percent of all the votes cast.¹⁷
- About 2.5 percent of the voting age population—1 of every 40 adults—is denied the right to vote as a result of current or previous felony conviction.¹⁸
- About 11 percent of voting-age citizens lack government-issued photo ID, making them unable to vote under certain voter ID laws.¹⁹
- Voter ID laws may harm more than 78,000 transgender voters, in large part because 68 percent of respondents in the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey did not have any identification that reflects both their preferred name and gender.²⁰
- In the 2016 election, only 40 percent of polling places were fully accommodating for individuals with disabilities.²¹
- Only 263 jurisdictions, which covers about a third of the voting-age population, have language-assistance requirements.²²
- Voter purges have sharply increased in the last decade. Between 2006 and 2008, 12 million voters were purged from voter rolls whereas between 2014 and 2016, that number jumped to 16 million. This translates to a nearly 33 percent increase.²³



END VOTER SUPPRESSION

Barrier Breakdown

Voter ID Requirements

Under a facade of protecting against voter fraud, states have raced to implement voter identification laws. The catch? Voter fraud is nearly non-existent, while the harm from voter ID laws, in 34 states, is very real. Not only does the practice of over-hyping voter fraud harm voters' confidence in the electoral system, it reinforces the creation of unjust barriers for historically disenfranchised communities to overcome. ²⁴

Gender Identity

There are a number of reasons why a transgender individual might not have updated their ID to reflect their gender identity. Poll workers may use the difference between one's gender presentation from the gender marker on their identification as a reason to deny a ballot. This is not grounds to deny a ballot, because as long as the voter data matches an acceptable form of ID (i.e. the name and address), the individual has the right to vote. Yet, the hostility, time, and bigotry may be so difficult to overcome that the individual may be discouraged from even showing up to vote.

Young People

While *Symm v. United States* affirmed the right of students to vote from their school address, despite the opposition's best effort, there are still complications of procuring the proper identification. In Texas, for example, a voter is permitted to use a gun-permit but not a student ID at the polls. ²⁵

Low Socio-Economic Status and Homelessness

Identification comes with a price tag. According to a study by the Government Accountability Office, direct costs to obtain proper identification can range from \$14.50 to \$58.50. Furthermore, while every state affirms a homeless individual's right to establish residency, even if they just cite where they often stay, whether that be a shelter or a park, that does not mean it is a streamlined process. The time and money required to obtain a form of identification might be too burdensome for people who need to focus on putting food in their stomachs or clothes on their backs. ²⁶

Cuts to Early Voting

When there are fewer options to vote in advance or absentee, poll lines get longer and the time it takes to vote—from finding a parking spot to casting the ballot—can drag on far too long.

For hourly wage-earners, many of whom already make less than the cost of living requires, missing work to vote is not an option. They could be fired for missing a shift or lose necessary pay because they had to stand in line for an excessive amount of time.

The long line also poses a problem at poll-closing time. If you are in line when the polls close, you maintain the right to vote; yet, reality does not always mirror policy. Voters may be turned away by misinformed or ill-intentioned poll workers or leave themselves if they believe they will not make it into the booth in time.



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Barrier Breakdown (cont'd)

Felony-Status Restrictions:

Today, approximately 6.1 million people are denied the right to vote because of felony disenfranchisement laws. ²⁷ In a criminal "justice" system rooted in racism, those laws disproportionately impact people of color. In particular, "Black Americans of voting age are more than four times more likely to lose their voting rights than the rest of the adult population, with one of every 13 Black adults disenfranchised nationally." ²⁸

In 14 states and the District of Columbia—Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah—individuals not in prison at the time of the election can vote. ²⁹

In 4 states—California, Colorado, Connecticut, and New York—individuals on probation can vote, though they cannot vote while in prison or on parole. ³⁰

In 18 states—Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin—individuals cannot vote in prison, on parole, or on probation, but their right is restored after. ³¹

In four states—Florida, Kentucky, Iowa, Virginia—individuals with felony convictions permanently lose the right to vote. ³²

Polling Accessibility

Disability Accessibility

A study conducted by the General Accountability Office found that only 40 percent of polling places surveyed "fully accommodated people with disabilities" in the 2016 election. ³³ The barriers to accessibility might include locations down a flight of stairs without elevators, broken audio machines, booths too narrow for a wheelchair, lack of curbside voting options, limited parking and/or difficult paths from parking to the location. ³⁴

While updates to the election process, such as voting by mail helps to accommodate with people with disabilities, it is not enough. As Michelle Bishop, voting rights specialist at the National Disability Rights Network, said, "Voters really love going to polling places on election days. It's part of being an American citizen. We can't say there is this one group of Americans who have to just stay home." ³⁵

Language Accessibility

The Voting Rights Act outlined legal requirements to make voting accessible for non-English or English-as-a-Second-Language voters. It mandates that jurisdictions accommodate (i.e. provide translated versions of all election information, from website content to the actual ballot) languages only in which "the number of United States citizens of voting age is a single language group within the jurisdiction: is more than 10,000, or is more than five percent of all voting age citizens, or on an Indian reservation, exceeds five percent of all reservation residents; and the illiteracy rate of the group is higher than the national illiteracy rate." ³⁶ This only leaves a third of the voting-age population covered by language-accessibility. ³⁷



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Barrier Breakdown (cont'd)

Registration Barriers

Despite lagging behind other countries in voter registration, states continue to develop new barriers to registration. In Ohio, the voting-age population lost the right to register the day of the election. Same-day registration permits eligible individuals to vote even if they were unable to meet the deadline to submit their registration.³⁸ In some states, the deadline to register could be as many as 30 days before the election.³⁹

Efforts to impede registration do not stop with deadlines. In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against proof-of-citizenship requirements in order to register for federal elections; however, it did not prohibit states from requiring proof for state elections. While Alabama and Georgia passed proof-of-citizenship laws, they have not implemented them due to the complications of federal vs. state voter registration. Arizona, however, requires eligible individuals to register separately for state and federal elections and includes the proof-of-citizenship requirements. Just this year, a federal judge struck down Kansas' law requiring proof.⁴⁰

In 2013, North Carolina also attacked student voting rights with the introduction of state Senate Bill 667, — which would prevent parents from claiming their children as tax deductions if the children register to vote in their college communities.⁴¹

Voter Purges

In 2013, the Supreme Court overturned the provision in the Voting Rights Act that required jurisdictions with histories of racial discrimination to receive authorized approval before changing their election laws and procedures. As a result of the ruling, states heightened the effort to clean their voter rolls of voters under the claim of updating their systems. While voter purges did exist before the 2013 ruling, the rate of purges in jurisdictions subject to Voting Rights Act oversight now exceed those in other jurisdictions. While the voter purging processes in some states were overturned, the Supreme Court just recently upheld Ohio's process. Ohio removes individuals who have died or moved from the voter roll. As part of the process, the state sends a notice to registered voters who have not voted in two years and they are required to respond. If they do not respond and do not vote at any point within the next four years, they are taken off the roll.

Once again, North Carolina did not even attempt to mask its voter suppression of young students of color. In 2013, 56 student voters, all Black, from historically Black university Elizabeth City State University, were purged from the voting rolls on the grounds they were not properly registered at their campus address.⁴²

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Who's Saying What

"Voting in our country has never been easy, but there's a new challenge: Politicians are trying to stop Americans from voting because of who they are likely to vote for in an election."- **Let America Vote**

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"Studies show that young people are interested in policy issues and the democratic process, but restrictions such as confusing residency rules and strict identification requirements create barriers to voting. These restrictions particularly affect college students because they are new to the process and more likely to move frequently. In addition, local election officials are sometimes hostile to the voting rights of college students, due to the misconception that students are not invested in the community and plan to leave upon graduation."- **Fair Elections Legal Network**

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"Thus, in what comes as close to a smoking gun as we are likely to see in modern times, the State's very justification for a challenged statute hinges explicitly on race — specifically its concern that African Americans, who had overwhelmingly voted for Democrats, had too much access to the franchise."- **U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit** regarding North Carolina's voter restrictions to 'prevent voter fraud.'

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"The proportion of the population reporting voter impersonation is indistinguishable from that reporting abduction by extraterrestrials. Based on this evidence, strict voter ID requirements address a problem that was certainly not common in the 2012 U.S. election. Effort to improve American election infrastructure and security would be better directed toward other initiatives."- **John S. Ahlquist, Kenneth R. Mayer & Simon Jackman**

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"Congress crafted the [National Voter Registration Act] with the understanding that, while States are required to make a 'reasonable effort' to remove ineligible voters from the registration lists, §20507(a)(4), such removal programs must be developed in a manner that 'prevent[s] poor and illiterate voters from being caught in a purge system which will require them to needlessly re-register' and 'prevent[s] abuse which has a disparate impact on minority communities,' ...Ohio's Supplemental Process reflects precisely the type of purge system that the NVRA was designed to prevent." - **Justice Sonia Sotomayor** following the *Husted v. A. Philip Randolph Institute* ruling.

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The Stories

"I also found myself seething at the fact that I'd been forced to fill out a form disclosing my status as someone with a disability in order to exercise my Constitutional right to vote at my designated polling place."

Denise Reich's polling area was down a flight of stairs making it inaccessible to her, so she waited. She waited first for a voter to track down a poll worker for her. She waited while the poll worker retrieved a form requiring her to say had a disability and could not enter the voting area. She waited while the poll worker ran up and down the stairs to collect the necessary ballot parts. And then she felt the pressure to rush through the ballot, while crouched against a wall on the sidewalk, as though her voting was a burden. Yet, she recalls, "The irony was that I'd probably had an easy time."

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"I already knew I had the proper ID. They were looking for an excuse to turn me down but I had come prepared."

Maryland requires certain first-time voters to present an ID in order to vote. Oliver pulled out his ID and was immediately met with resistance and bigotry. Oliver identifies as trans masculine, though his ID still has an "F" on it because of the associated cost of changing it. Oliver waited an hour while the poll workers deliberated over whether he should be able to vote. Even though he was ready to push back, and even though he was able to vote, the hostility from the experience led Oliver to determine it was not worth showing up at the polls, that an absentee ballot would have to suffice.

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"She had a good faith belief that she could vote. She would have never voted if she didn't know she could vote."

Crystal Mason dashed off to the polling place after her mother "scolded" her to go vote. A few months later, she was arrested and a year later she was sentenced to five years behind bars. Mason was convicted for a felony and was on supervised release when she went to vote. In her home state of Texas, voting rights are not restored until after the full sentence is served, including supervision; however, Mason was unaware that she had lost her right to vote. While she serves her five years for a mistake, a white woman who tried to vote twice received probation and a fine.

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"Where I register to vote and how I vote is not indicative of my financial aid. The Board of Elections is not able to separate that tie. How can you lie to students like that?"

Sarah Lilly wanted to vote in the community she attended school because she felt invested in the community and its success. Yet, she was told by election officials that students could not register using a campus address since it is not a permanent residence. They continued that if students attempted to vote they could lose financial aid, scholarships, or face fines for incorrectly filling out their voter registration form. After doing more work and research, Lilly learned this was not true, it was just a tactic to prevent her from voting.

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END VOTER SUPPRESSION

Setting the Stage

1789: The Constitution grants the states power to set voting requirements. States limited this right to property-owning or tax-paying white males.

1870: The 15th Amendment prevents states from denying the right to vote on grounds of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

1870 - 1965: With Reconstruction came a new wave of disenfranchisement tactics. Former Confederate states passed Jim Crow laws and amendments to disenfranchise Black and poor white voters. These laws were often applied in a discriminatory and violent manner.

1920: The 19th Amendment guaranteed women the right to vote. In practice, though, the same restrictions that hindered the ability of non-white men to vote now also applied to non-white women, effectively giving only white men and women and white upper class citizens the right to vote.

1924: All Native Americans are granted citizenship and the right to vote, regardless of tribal affiliation.

1964: The 24th Amendment is ratified, eliminating poll taxes.

1965: Voting Rights Act of 1965, signed into law by Lyndon B. Johnson, began protecting voters and voter registration. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 also gave voting rights to racial minorities to combat Jim Crow restrictions.

1971: The 26th Amendment guarantees the right to vote to individuals 18 and older.

1979: *Symm v. United States* affirmed the right of students to vote either from their home address or from their school address. Anti-student voter efforts claimed students were not invested in the communities in which they attended school and therefore should not be permitted to vote there.

1993: National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) requires States to offer voter registration opportunities at State motor vehicle agencies, at certain State and local offices—including public assistance and disability offices—and to allow mail-in registration applications. NVRA requires States to maintain accurate and current voter registration lists.

2002: Help America Vote Act (HAVA) passes to update, modernize, and better regulate our voting system (following the punchcard Al Gore/Bush Scandal). HAVA called to replace punchcard and lever-based voting systems. HAVA created the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to test and certify voting equipment, maintain the National Voter Registration form and administer a national clearinghouse on elections that includes shared practices and information for voters.

2013: *Shelby County v. Holder* and Voting Rights Act reversal: The Supreme Court decided the section of the Voting Rights Act that used a formula to determine racial discrimination in voting was unconstitutional. As a result of ruling the formula unconstitutional, states previously requiring approval before changing their voting laws (because of their history of racial discrimination) were now free to change their voting systems. This led to a drastic increase in voter suppression laws.

2018: *Husted v. A. Philip Randolph Institute* decision upheld Ohio's voter roll purges. Ohio removes individuals who have died or moved from the voter roll. As part of the process, the state sends registered voters who have not voted in two years a notice. They are required to respond to the notice. However, if they do not respond and do not vote at any point within the next four years, they are taken off the roll.



END VOTER SUPPRESSION

Setting the Stage (cont'd)

Jim Crow Disenfranchisement Tactics

While the 15th Amendment guaranteed Black and other racial and ethnic minorities the right to vote, states and local governments used various tactics to make it inconvenient, intimidating, or impossible for them to cast ballots. These tactics were blatant and violent. Such tactics targeting Black voters included:

- Literacy tests: intended to be impossible, confusingly worded, unanswerable.
Example: "Write right from the left to the right as you see it spelled here."
- Grandfather Clauses: required that an individual had a grandfather who voted before 1876 (the date African Americans were granted the right to vote in the South)
- Poll Taxes: making people pay to vote
- Violence: threats, fired from jobs, beaten, killed for attempting to vote.

Brief History of Women's Suffrage

The women's suffrage movement took off in 1848 when a group of abolitionist activists led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott gathered in Seneca Falls, New York to discuss women's rights. The delegates at the Convention wrote the Declaration of Sentiments which stated "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men and women are created equal." American Suffragists faced a lot of criticism and were viewed as "unwomanly" and deviant for demanding political rights. The package of post-Civil War civil-rights legislation of the late 1800's left out women which further enraged women's suffrage activists. Despite the fact that women's suffrage movement was rooted in abolition, fractions of suffragists refused to support the 15th Amendment that excluded them and turned to align with racist campaigners. The Women's Suffrage movement eventually changed their strategy from advocating for equality between men and women to praising the political virtue of women's inherent domesticity and piety. This strategy worked and after WWI women finally gained the right to vote in 1920, but women of color faced extreme discrimination and were still prevented from voting until 1965.



END VOTER SUPPRESSION

The 1-1-5

Voter Inclusion/Empowerment

- **H.R. 12 and S. 1437, Voter Empowerment Act of 2017:** To modernize voter registration, promote access to voting for individuals with disabilities, protect the ability of individuals to exercise the right to vote in elections for Federal office, and for other purposes.
- **H.R. 2499, Voting Access Act:** To amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to require States to meet standards for the location and operation of polling places used in elections for Federal office, including a standard requiring States to ensure that no individual waits for longer than one hour to cast a vote at a polling place, and for other purposes.
- **H.R. 3113, Citizenship Empowerment Act:** To require the chief election officials of the States to provide voter registration forms at certain naturalization proceedings, and for other purposes.

Eliminate ID Laws

- **H.R. 607, Voter Access Protection Act of 2017:** To prohibit election officials from requiring individuals to provide photo identification as a condition of obtaining or casting a ballot in an election for Federal office or registering to vote in elections for Federal office, and for other purposes.

Changing When We Vote

- **S. 1828 and H.R. 1094, Weekend Voting Act:** The Weekend Voting Act would move elections from Tuesdays to the first full weekend of November and have them last two whole days. It would take effect beginning November 2018, for any federal elections such as president and Congress, but not for state or local elections. This would mean that if it passed, there would be multiple election days in 2018 unless all states & local governments also changed their practices.

Student Engagement

- **S. 2240, Students VOTE Act:** A bill to direct the Election Assistance Commission to carry out a pilot program under which the Commission shall provide funds to local educational agencies for initiatives to provide voter registration information to secondary school students in the 12th grade.
- **H.R. 6298, High School Voter Empowerment Act:** To amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to require States to designate public high schools as voter registration agencies, to direct such schools to conduct voter registration drives for students attending such schools, to direct the Secretary of Education to make grants to reimburse such schools for the costs of conducting such voter registration drives, and for other purposes.
- **S. 2699 and H.R. 5564, Help Students Vote Act:** A bill to amend title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require institutions of higher education that participate in programs under such title to distribute voter registration forms to students enrolled at the institution, and for other purposes.

Vote By Mail

- **H.R. 946, Universal Right to Vote by Mail Act:** To amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to allow all eligible voters to vote by mail in Federal elections
- **S. 1231 and H.R. 2669, Vote By Mail Act:** A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to allow all eligible voters to vote by mail in Federal elections, to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to provide for automatic voter registration.



END VOTER SUPPRESSION

The 1-1-5 (cont'd)

Automatic Registration

- **S. 2106, Register America to Vote Act:** A bill to require States to automatically register eligible voters at the time they turn 18 to vote in Federal elections, and for other purposes.
- **S. 1353, Automatic Voter Registration Act:** A bill to require States to automatically register eligible voters to vote in elections for Federal offices, and for other purposes.
- **H.R. 2840, Automatic Voter Registration Act:** To amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to require each State to ensure that each individual who provides identifying information to the State motor vehicle authority is automatically registered to vote in elections for Federal office held in the State unless the individual does not meet the eligibility requirements for registering to vote in such elections or declines to be registered to vote in such elections, and for other purposes.

Voting Rights Act Amendments

- **H.Res. 751:** Calling on Congress to enact a new preclearance formula for the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and condemning voter suppression laws enacted by States and political subdivisions.
- **S. 1419:** Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2017 A bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes.
- **H.R. 2978:** Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2017 To amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes..

★ International Point of Reference ★

Automatic Registration

-Canada, Australia, Germany, France, Sweden, Argentina, Peru and Belgium all have automatic voter registration. ⁵²

Mandatory Voting

-There are 22 countries with mandatory voting, including Argentina, Costa Rica, Honduras, Singapore, and Thailand. ⁵³

-In Australia, where there is a \$20 fee for not voting, voter turnout was about 94 percent, compared to the United States' 57 percent in the 2012 election. ⁵⁴

-Concerns with mandatory voting include the reality that there are still accessibility and timing barriers to voting, there is question of whether not voting is freedom of speech, and not everyone feels informed enough to vote.

National Voting Day

-Countries including Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, India, and New Zealand, have voting on weekends or holidays. ⁵⁵

-Not only does this help remove some of the barriers to voting, it also emphasizes the importance of civic engagement.



END VOTER SUPPRESSION

The States Are Getting to Work

Automatic Voter Registration (AVR)

There are 14 states and the District of Columbia that have automatic voter registration systems in place—Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland (passed in 2018), Massachusetts, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington (passed in 2018), and West Virginia. In most of those states, the AVR process starts when an individual goes to the DMV to apply for, renew, or otherwise handle their driver's license. Some states identified other state agencies or have designated AVR agencies to run the system. Each state has a unique opt-out system. ⁵⁶

According to the Brennan Center for Justice, "Automatic voter registration, would save money, increase accuracy and participation—and add an additional 50 million voters to the rolls permanently." ⁵⁷

Same- Day Registration

Currently, 18 states and the District of Columbia allow election day/same-day voter registration—California, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming. The majority of these states require proof of residency and at least one form of identification. Some states allow individuals to cast provisional ballots, without providing identification, that will be counted once voter eligibility is determined by the state. ⁵⁸

According to Demos, "States that allow Same-Day Registration consistently lead the nation in voter participation." ⁵⁹

Online Voter Registration

Most states (38) and the District of Columbia permit eligible voters to register online—Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma (will be available in 2020), Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin. ⁶⁰

According to Elisabeth MacNamara, President of League of Women Voters of the United States, "Online voter registration is a critical step to bringing our voting systems into the 21st century, however, most of the systems implemented thus far leave out a significant and important part of the population—citizens who don't have a driver's license or non-driver's ID." ⁶¹

Early Voting

In 34 states, not including the 3 that mail ballots to all voters, and the District of Columbia allow early voting—Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming. With early voting, registered voters can cast their ballots in person at a polling place. ⁶²

According to the Brennan Center for Justice, "the key benefits of early in person voting are: 1. Reduced stress on the voting system on Election Day; 2. Shorter lines on Election Day; 3. Improved poll worker performance; 4. Early identification and correction of registration errors and voting system glitches; and 5. Greater access to voting and increased voter satisfaction." ⁶³



END VOTER SUPPRESSION

The States Are Getting to Work (cont'd)

All-Mail Voting

Three states—Colorado, Oregon, and Washington—use all-mail voting systems. California is slowly moving to permit counties to use all-mail voting, Utah leaves the decision up to individual counties, and Hawaii is permitting smaller counties to pilot the system. In all-mail voting systems, every registered voter receives a ballot by mail which they can then return via mail, though they still have the right to vote in-person. ⁶⁴

According to Editors of *Washington Monthly*, Gilad Edelman and Paul Glastri, in Colorado where "at-home" voting is an option, voter turnout rates exceeded expectations. "Vote at home clearly seems to have pushed young people and infrequent voters into the electorate—exactly what our ailing system needs. Democrats should be fighting tooth and nail to get it implemented wherever possible. But the partisanship results are hazy enough that Republicans shouldn't be too scared: It looks like these low-frequency voters tend to be less partisan and therefore more up for grabs." ⁶⁵

Pre-Registration

A number of states permit residents to pre-register to vote when they turn 16 or 17, i.e. around the time they receive their license, so that upon turning 18 they are ready to vote. In 13 states and the District of Columbia pre-registration is available at 16 years old—California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah and Washington. In Maine, Nevada, New Jersey and West Virginia individuals can pre-register at 17 years old. Alaska, Georgia, Iowa, and Missouri allow pre-registration after the age of 17 with varying conditions. ⁶⁶

According to Fair Vote, "Academic studies and electoral analyses show that voting behavior is habit-forming. If you vote, you will likely keep voting. If you don't vote, you probably won't start. It's important to engage prospective voters early on to create a habit of voting and civic engagement." ⁶⁷

Addressing Felony Disenfranchisement

In only 2 states—Maine and Vermont—do individuals maintain the right to vote while in prison. ⁶⁸

According to The Sentencing Project, "Denying the right to vote to an entire class of citizens is deeply problematic to a democratic society and counterproductive to effective reentry. Fortunately, many states are reconsidering their archaic disenfranchisement policies, with 24 states enacting reforms since 1997, but there is still much to be done before the United States will resemble comparable nations in allowing the full democratic participation of its citizens." ⁶⁹

Additional Measures

Just this year, Utah extended its voter registration deadlines and passed a measure that could prompt counties to offer early voting. ⁷⁰

Washington State passed a state-level Voting Rights Act this year that intends to ensure equal opportunity in voting. If a resident intends to challenge a city's election system, they can first notify the city, which then has 180 days to correct the problem. If cities fail to reform the system, voters can sue and the state has the authority to mandate change. Lawmakers are also granted to power to improve their systems so long as they follow guidelines created to improve voting equality. ⁷¹

San Francisco and College Park, Maryland recently joined Chicago in granting non-citizens the right to vote in certain local elections. ⁷²



END VOTER SUPPRESSION

Think On It

We provided you with the information we found most relevant, but there's always more to the story. Here are some sources to help you continue learning in order to develop your own conclusions.



The National Center for Transgender Equality is the nation's leading social justice advocacy organization winning life-saving change for transgender people. NCTE's "Voting While Trans" resources are critical tool in understanding the barriers Voter ID laws impose on the transgender community, how to address them, and how to get ready for election day. transequality.org/issues/voting-rights

Let America Vote is fighting back against proposals across the country that make it harder for eligible voters to exercise their constitutional right to cast a ballot—whether it's extreme identification requirements, questionable purges of voter rolls, voter intimidation, new and extreme voter registration processes, or anything that makes voting harder. letamericavote.org



Color Of Change is the nation's largest online racial justice organization. The organization helps people respond effectively to injustice in the world around us. As a national online force driven by over one million members, we move decision-makers in corporations and government to create a more human and less hostile world for Black people in America. colorofchange.org

Election Protection, a national and nonpartisan coalition, works year-round to ensure that all voters have an equal opportunity to vote and have that vote count. Made up of more than 100 local, state and national partners, Election Protection uses a wide range of tools and activities to protect, advance and defend the right to vote. 866ourvote.org



The REV UP Campaign, of AAPD, aims to increase the political power of the disability community while also engaging candidates and the media on disability issues. REV UP stands for Register! Educate! Vote! Use your Power! aapd.com/advocacy/voting/

The Sentencing Project, founded in 1986, works for a fair and effective U.S. criminal justice system by promoting reforms in sentencing policy, addressing unjust racial disparities and practices, and advocating for alternatives to incarceration. sentencingproject.org/issues/felony-disenfranchisement



The National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHHLA) was established in 1991 as a nonpartisan association of major Hispanic national organizations and distinguished Hispanic leaders from all over the nation. nationalhispanicleadership.org/latinos-united-for-voting-rights



END VOTER SUPPRESSION

What Will You Do?

You've read all that you can read, you've thought critically about the topic at hand, you've pondered the state of our world. Now you're feeling fired up. What policy solutions did you come across that seem like an idea worth pursuing, or what solutions did you brainstorm? It's time to see how they would hold up against your objectives.

1. **Select your Solution:** Place them in separate boxes underneath the "Policy" column.
2. **Determine the Tool:** Does the tool in your solution employ a grant, regulation, tax incentive, other?
3. **Select your Criteria/Objectives:** Types of criteria can include Cost to Government, Number of People Served, Ability to Improve X, Risk Averse, Etc.
4. **Rank your Criteria:** Rank in terms of importance. That way, if a solution measures up to your most important criteria but slightly misses the mark on one of low-importance, you can weigh that during your analysis.
5. **Calculate:** How well does each solution meet each criteria? This can be either qualitative or quantitative. If your solution is continuing a program, research program evaluations. If your solution is creating a program or incentive or regulation, research evaluations of similar policies and make your best estimation. For qualitative, rank it on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being very effective. If it is quantitative, i.e. cost, fill in the number.
6. **Analyze the Arena:** Who are the stakeholders, allies, and opponents for your solutions? Consider both elected officials and organizations with political strength.

		Criteria		
		Criteria 1:	Criteria 2:	Criteria 3:
		Low/Moderate/High Importance	Low/Moderate/High Importance	Low/Moderate/High Importance
Policy	Tool			
Idea 1:	Grant/Regulation/ Incentive/Other	How well/poorly the policy meets the criteria (Score of 1-5)	How well/poorly the policy meets the criteria (Score of 1-5)	How well/poorly the policy meets the criteria (Score of 1-5)
Idea 2:	Grant/Regulation/ Incentive/Other	How well/poorly the policy meets the criteria (Score of 1-5)	How well/poorly the policy meets the criteria (Score of 1-5)	How well/poorly the policy meets the criteria (Score of 1-5)
Idea 3:	Grant/Regulation/ Incentive/Other	How well/poorly the policy meets the criteria (Score of 1-5)	How well/poorly the policy meets the criteria (Score of 1-5)	How well/poorly the policy meets the criteria (Score of 1-5)

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Your Turn:

		Criteria		
Policy	Tool			



END VOTER SUPPRESSION

On the Table

When we surround ourselves with passionate women, our knowledge grows. Get together with your organization, a few friends, or your peers and talk about your process in learning or reexamining this topic. These questions are meant to aide your conversation, but feel free to explore ideas and questions of your own. Step outside your comfort zone. None of us have all the answers, that's why we need to work together. You are sure to bring something to the table that no one else considered. Your voice is meant to be heard. Let's hear what ideas you have on the table. Share only what you feel comfortable sharing, but be sure to share the space.

1. Do you have any lingering questions about the topic?
2. What were your initial reactions to the statistics or the information presented?
3. How did you feel learning about/working through this topic?
4. What do you think is the most common misconception about the topic?
5. What are the main barriers creating voter suppression?
6. What strategies would you employ to overcome them?
7. Of the bills in Congress, which one do you want to mobilize around? How would you build a campaign to promote/prevent it?
8. Of the policy needs, which do you think should be addressed first and how would you go about it?
9. What was your favorite solution that you evaluated?
10. What would be your "silver bullet," ideal solution?
11. What was one solution that someone else suggested that you want to discuss more?
12. What do you wish people knew about this topic?
13. What does your campus/community do to support voting rights?



END VOTER SUPPRESSION

Do Something

Take a stand and make your thoughts heard. We ask that in your outreach you do not state that your opinion is the official stance of Platform unless it is taken from our Platform Pledge. But you can certainly give Platform a shoutout for having the conversation.

Blog It/ Vlog It *We know you have something to say*

Walk us through your perspective and rally people to your cause. Your posts will be featured on our website and social media.

Email your blog to: media@platformwomen.org, include "Blog Post" and a title in the subject line

Get On Social Media *This isn't #slacktivism*

According to a report from the Congressional Management Foundation, which surveyed Congressional Staff, "71 [percent of respondents] said social media comments directed to the Member/Senator by 'multiple constituents affiliated with a specific group or cause' would have 'some' or 'a lot' of influence on an undecided lawmaker." There you have it—tweet, Instagram, and post away on Facebook. #GiveMeAPlatform.



[@PlatformWomen](#) | facebook.com/PlatformWomen | [@PlatformWomen](#)

Contact Your Reps *You don't even have to search for their contact info*

Head over to All In Together's Action Center* and once you sign up they will provide you with the names and portals to contact your elected officials. You can write/say whatever comes to mind, but feel free to use the prompt below.

All In Together is nonpartisan and does not take a stance on this issue but gives you the tools to make your input known.

_____,
This month, I, along with young women across the nation, worked with Platform to advance the conversations to end voter suppression. As your constituent, you should know that I believe _____ because _____.
We need to further conversations and advance policies that will _____. I ask that you _____. I plan on using my voice and staying active until change is realized. You should know that I certainly exercise my right to vote.

Go to: aitogether.org/actioncenter

Get Motivated *Vote now for leaders who will support policies to expand the right to vote tomorrow*

motivote makes voting fun, easy, and social, so young people show up on election day. Want to make sure your friends, family, coworkers, and gym buddies vote? Sign up today! They're welcoming participants during the primary election in New York (Sept. 13) now, and more states during the midterms.

Go to: motivote.us

Call It Out *It shouldn't be your burden, but there are ways to get help*

If you want to report a problem, such as intimidation or an ID not being accepted, or get help from trained specialists on election day, you can call Election Protection Hotlines:

English: 1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683);

Spanish/English: 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA (1-888-839-8682);

Asian Languages/English: 1-888-API-VOTE (1-888-274-8683);

Arabic/English: 1-844-YallaUS (1-844-925-5287)



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