



LGBTQ VOTING RIGHTS

CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF LGBTQ VOTING RIGHTS

VOTER SUPPRESSION SCHEMES

- Acknowledging the diversity of the LGBTQ community is key in order to understand the impact of voter suppression tactics used on the community. People of color and people under 30 are more likely to identify as LGBTQ. LGBTQ people are more likely to be a part of the disability community than their heterosexual counterparts. Additionally, low-income people identify with the LGBTQ community at higher rates than people with higher incomes. In fact, 40% of homeless youth served by street outreach and housing programs identify as LGBTQ. All of these factors make LGBTQ community members particularly susceptible to voter suppression schemes aimed to disenfranchise communities likely to vote for Democrats: people of color, immigrants, young people, and low-income people.

VOTER ID

- Voter ID laws are becoming more prevalent, and as of 2018, 34 states have some sort of voter ID law in effect. In addition to making it harder for people of color and low-income people to vote, these laws also have a disenfranchising effect on transgender or non-binary people. People with a gender identity that does not match the name, gender marker, or photo on their ID are more likely to receive resistance at the polls or be denied the right to vote altogether. Legally changing one's name or gender marker is a costly and lengthy process that may be unavailable to many people. This barrier can also prevent LGBTQ people from voting.

VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS

- Like many other government forms, voter registration forms may also require choosing a binary gender option. This may make trans or nonbinary people uncomfortable as well as cause unnecessary confusion for election workers. Some states have made changes to their forms to eliminate the binary choice. For example, Virginia has replaced the male/female binary option with a blank space for the voter to fill in. Oregon, Michigan, and California have eliminated the gender requirement altogether.

PROBLEMS FACING THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY AND SOLUTIONS

1. When your gender does not match the gender marker on your voter ID or your voter registration:

- Send an information sheet to county election offices that can be used as part of training and Make sure that you are fully aware of all the voter ID requirements your state may have. Not all states require a photo ID to vote; of the 34 states with an ID law, 17 of them do not require an ID with a photo. In those states a document that proves a voter's name and residency, such as a bank statement or utility bill, can be used as a voter ID. If you are concerned about poll workers questioning your photo ID, check your state laws to see what alternative IDs you can use.

1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3490559/>

2. <http://news.gallup.com/poll/158066/special-report-adults-identify-lgbt.aspx>

3. <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Durso-Gates-LGBT-Homeless-Youth-Survey-July-2012.pdf>

4. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/sep/13/america-history-voter-suppression-donald-trump-election-fraud>

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

6. <https://transequality.org/issues/resources/voting-while-trans-preparing-voter-id-laws>



- Have conversations with your county election offices about educating poll workers about issues that affect LGBTQ people. Encourage them to provide applicable information as part of training and materials given to polling place workers. Organizations like the ACLU and the National Center for Transgender Equality have fact sheets made specifically for poll workers.
- If poll workers are not complying with the law, reach out to the DNC for help. Call us on our Voter Hotline at 1-833-DEM-VOTE (1-833-336-8683).

2. Where the name on your ID does not match the name on your voter registration:

- Make sure that you are fully aware of all of the voter ID requirements your state may have. Many states have provisions that allow non-matching names to be accepted. For example, Virginia election administrators issued guidance for the interpretation of the code regarding discrepancies between the name on a voter's ID and their name on the poll books: if a voter's name on their ID is "substantially similar" to the name in the poll book, they must be allowed to vote.
- If you have legally changed your name since you registered to vote, make sure to update your voter registration accordingly prior to the registration deadline in your state. If your name change was completed after the voter registration deadline, check your state's guidelines on this. Some states allow voters to show proof of a legal name change at the polls in addition to their ID.
- If your state does not have guidance that allows for flexibility with names, coordinate with your state Democratic Party to work with your election officials to issue clarifying guidance.
- If poll workers are not complying with the law, reach out to the DNC for help. Call us on our Voter Hotline at 1-833-DEM-VOTE (1-833-336-8683).

3. Where you are experiencing homelessness or do not have a stable address:

- You are not required to live in a "traditional dwelling" to be able to register to vote. Homeless people in all states can register to vote and designate their place of residence as a street corner, park, shelter, or any location where they usually spend the night.
- Not all states require a mailing address in order to register to vote. Of the states that do, some states allow PO boxes or places like shelters, churches, and advocacy centers to be used as mailing addresses for voter registration. Check your state's laws or call the Voter Hotline at 1-833-DEM-VOTE (1-833-336-8683) for more information.

4. Where you are experiencing intimidation or ignorance from poll workers:

- If you feel intimidated or are encountering resistance, reach out to the DNC for help. Call us on our Voter Hotline at 1-833-DEM-VOTE (1-833-336-8683).
- If a poll worker denies you access to a regular ballot, you have the right to request a provisional ballot. If you end up casting a provisional ballot, be sure to follow up with your local elections office about the status of your ballot and what you need to do to ensure it is counted.

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

8. <http://www.acluohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/OhioPollWorkerTips2016.pdf>

9. http://nationalhomeless.org/projects/vote/Manual_2012.pdf



- Make sure that you are aware of your state's laws before going to the polls. Although you are not required to, if you have concerns about your ID being accepted, it may be useful to bring multiple pieces of ID or ways to prove your residency.

DNC RESOURCES

- Permanent National Voter Hotline: In 2017 we launched a permanent voter hotline at the DNC that's open and answered year-round. In addition to our normal hours, we expand the hotline's capacity when states request support on Election Days. Call us at 1-833-DEM-VOTE (1-833-336-8683).
- IWillVote.com: This website is now a one-stop shop for registering to vote and updating your voter registration in every state. At a state party's request, we can add polling locations for upcoming elections.

For more information about the DNC's Civic Engagement and Voter Protection Department, call us at 1-833-DEM-VOTE (1-833-336-8683).

10. http://nationalhomeless.org/projects/vote/Manual_2012.pdf