



ELECTION Integrity Toolkit

Elections 2024

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution...”

Our freedom to vote in fair and secure elections is the foundation of our system of self-governance established under the U.S. Constitution. As citizens, we have a voice that many people around the world do not. Every election, in communities across America, tens of thousands of officials, workers, and volunteers put partisan preferences aside and come together to ensure that elections operate safely and securely.

This toolkit is designed to help explain how the election process works and to increase confidence in the integrity and fairness of our elections, offering messaging, clear information, and shareable content to promote Americans’ freedom to vote.

In addition to content for national audiences, in this guide we also provide additional materials with:

- State-specific information, resources, and trusted links for seven states that are key to the presidential election outcome: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin; and
- Messages and materials specifically for faith organizations and messengers; veterans and military families; and groups and leaders communicating with business and industry audiences.

The toolkit is designed to help you communicate directly with voters and to equip your own trusted messengers with clear information and resources to share credible information about the built-in processes for election verification before, during, and after a vote is cast.

We appreciate all the work you are doing in your community to share accurate election information and to ensure every eligible citizen has the freedom to vote. We welcome your suggestions for bolstering informed participation in elections that will strengthen our political institutions and American democracy.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Table of Contents.....	2
Election Integrity Toolkit: How to Use This Guide.....	3
Who Runs Elections?.....	5
Who Can Vote?	6
How Can We Be Sure Ballots Are Secure and Votes Are Counted Accurately?	7
What is the Certification Process?.....	9
What is the Electoral College?	10
Veterans and Military Families Messaging and Resources	11
Faith Messaging and Resources	12
Business Messaging and Resources	13
Relevant Election Integrity Messaging – Fair and Legal and Good Election	14
Relevant Election Integrity Messaging – The Change in the Democratic Nominee	16
Glossary of Terms	17
How to Get & Cast a Ballot in Your State	19
How Elections Work in Your State	19

Election Integrity Toolkit:

How to Use This Guide

Building trust in our electoral process requires time and consistent communication. Voters need to hear from trusted messengers—like you—to feel confident in participating in our system of self-governance. The Election Integrity Toolkit is designed to support you this year, providing resources to help share credible information and promote confidence in the integrity of our elections. Your work is mission-critical to keeping the foundations of our Constitution solid.

This guide contains verified information that you can share about how elections work leading up to Election Day and into the critical vote counting and certification process that follow.

Key points to emphasize include:

Oversight. Voters should know that our election systems are managed by everyday Americans who are their friends, family members, neighbors, and co-workers. Election officials and poll workers are trained and work hard to ensure that every eligible vote is counted accurately and in accordance with applicable law. They put aside partisan preferences and come together to serve their communities by carrying out safe and secure elections.

Transparency. To build confidence, it's essential for voters to understand the election process. Encourage people to see how elections work for themselves by helping as poll workers or poll observers in their communities. Voters can also learn about transparency measures state and local election officials use, such as public inspections of voting machines, voter eligibility and identity checks, and security checklists.

Integrity. The verification processes in place function continuously before, during, and after votes are cast. While specific procedures in states vary, all states take steps to ensure the integrity of the voting process, inform voters about the many measures in place that prevent fraud—including monitoring voting machines, verifying voter IDs and signatures, and audits—all of which contribute to achieving accurate vote counts.

Pride, Duty & Freedom. Freedom is a core American value. We have a collective responsibility to maintain our system of self-governance and protect the freedoms we cherish. Americans can count on election workers to administer free and fair elections because they are motivated by a commitment to serve their communities and the electoral process. They work incredibly long hours because they value the election process and everyone's right to vote. We have a duty to be informed and participate actively to safeguard this legacy for future generations.

Throughout the toolkit, you will find materials supporting these principles that can help you communicate about the checks and balances in place to verify accuracy and to uphold the integrity and security of our system. You will also find date and state-specific information to educate people about when and how to vote (or become a poll worker!) in your area.

You can contribute to the broader effort by posting content, holding in-person and virtual events, or otherwise engaging around important dates related to the election in order to help inform every voter:

- Deadline to Register to Vote for the General Election
- Deadline to Apply for a Mail-In Ballot
- Deadline to Return a Mail-In Ballot
- Early In-Person Voting Period
- Election Day
- Canvassing
- Certification

You may also want to be ready with factual and accurate information when false information is likely to spread, such as following the Presidential debates, or campaign rallies in your area.

Should you encounter false information that could undermine confidence in our elections, the following guidelines can help you respond:

SIFT. Before taking any action or sharing anything on social media take these four actions:

- **S**top.
- **I**nvestigate.
- **F**ind reliable information.
- **T**race sources.

Don't Amplify. Don't re-post, share or comment directly on the bad information. You don't want anyone who hasn't already seen it to be exposed.

Respond with Accurate Information, Not Rebuttals. Often rebutting an argument directly involves repeating the bad information in order to knock it down. Instead, just respond with accurate information that asserts the transparency, oversight, and accountability measures in place to uphold the integrity of our election systems.

Use Trusted Messengers. People are more likely to listen to messages that come from people they trust. According to public opinion research conducted for Issue One, the most trusted messengers for credible election information are local election officials, business leaders, faith leaders, veterans, and other trusted community members. Hearing from them means so much more than hearing from politicians or the media.

Respond Where the False Information Appears. If bad information appears on social media, such as a Facebook page, it's better to share accurate information with a link to your state or local election website. If you see bad information appear in an opinion editorial or a letter to the editor, have a trusted messenger write their own letter explaining how elections work to uphold our system of self-governance.

Who Runs **Elections?**

The United States has a highly decentralized election administration system. In general, state laws govern the conduct of all elections in each state, while county or municipal officials typically implement the day-to-day functions of running an election under the framework of their state's law. At the same time, the federal government has its own role to play too. Because the majority of elections are run at a state and local level, the voting experience can be very different depending on where a voter lives.

Elections are usually administered at the county level, though in some states, cities or townships run elections. There are more than 10,000 election jurisdictions in the U.S. Jurisdictions vary dramatically in size with the smallest towns having only a few hundred registered voters and the largest jurisdiction in the country having over 5 million.

In addition to the full-time, paid workforce in localities, poll workers are members of the community who volunteer their time (or are paid a small stipend) to assist voters during early voting and on Election Day. This includes thousands of veterans, who have continued their legacy of service by volunteering as poll workers in local communities across the United States to ensure the safety and security of our election process. According to estimates from the Election Assistance Commission, it takes a temporary workforce of about 1 million poll workers to staff polling places across the country for a general election in a presidential election year. To become a poll worker at your local precinct, visit www.powerthepolls.org to find opportunities to serve.

Each state also has a chief election official who has an oversight or advisory role over state and federal elections. In most cases, this is the Secretary of State, though in some states the Lieutenant Governor or an elections commissioner holds the responsibility. These are usually elected positions, but can also be appointed by the governor in some cases. You can find out who the chief election official is in your state here: <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/state-profiles-elections>

- **Administrators:** Election administrators are the public servants who oversee and carry out the overall election process. They ensure compliance with laws, coordinate logistics, hire poll workers and oversee the counting of ballots. There are also election administration staffers who are temporary employees.
- **Poll workers:** Poll workers are trained as part of a large, temporary workforce to staff polling places during early voting and on Election Day. Although most poll workers are paid, most are not employed full time by a board of elections, county clerk's office or similar government body. Poll workers perform many different tasks at their assigned polling places, including: helping voters check in, managing voter lines, troubleshooting equipment issues, providing directions and assistance to voters, coordinating the transmission of election results to central counting facilities, and/or reconciling the number of ballots received with the number of voters who checked in. According to the National Conference on State Legislatures, 42 states and the District of Columbia require election worker training under state law. Additionally, 42 states and the District of Columbia require temporary election workers to take an oath of office and sign a document committing them to doing their duties honestly and faithfully. Of the states that do not require training, most have provisions in state law encouraging training or requiring the state to develop materials that localities have the option to use.
- **Observers:** Every state has provisions for observers to witness the election process. Every state allows for members of the public, or representatives from political parties, to be poll watchers. People of all party affiliations are subject to the same rules and regulations and have equal access to observe the vote count process. Check for what your state allows here: <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/policies-for-election-observers#table>

Election administrators, workers, and volunteers are Republicans, Democrats, Independents and affiliated with minor political parties. They live in your community, are your neighbors, and include supporters of every candidate on the ballot.

These public servants come together, putting partisan preferences aside, to work together ensuring elections run smoothly and that every vote is secure and counted accurately.

Who Can **Vote?**

In order to protect the integrity of the election, only eligible citizens can vote in U.S. elections. States must maintain voter registration processes that determine a person's eligibility to vote, and to ensure they vote only once. Perpetrators of election fraud and voter intimidation are investigated and prosecuted, and face jail times and hefty fines.

The following are the requirements to vote in the U.S.:

- **You must be a U.S. citizen.** In 1996, the U.S. Congress passed a law prohibiting noncitizens from voting in federal elections, including elections for the U.S. House, U.S. Senate, and presidential elections. The District of Columbia and municipalities in three states allow noncitizens to vote in local elections only.
- **You must meet your state's residency requirements.** Note that you can be experiencing homelessness and still meet these requirements.
- **You must be 18 years old on or before Election Day.** In almost every state, you can register to vote before you turn 18 if you will be 18 by Election Day. Some states also allow 17-year-olds who will be 18 by Election Day to vote in primaries.
- **You must register to vote by your state's voter registration deadline.** North Dakota does not require voter registration.

Under Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution, the Tenth Amendment, and the Seventeenth Amendment, the states have the rights, powers, and privileges of establishing voter qualifications, including voter registration requirements. As a result, states have the power to obtain information they deem necessary to assess eligibility of voter registration applicants, and to enforce voter qualifications. Check with your state or local election office for any questions about who can and cannot vote. Find a link to your state's election information at <https://www.howelectionswork.org/>.

How Can We Be Sure Ballots Are **Secure** and Votes Are Counted **Accurately**?

Election officials in every state and local jurisdiction have a system of checks and balances to safeguard the voting process and ensure that elections are fair and accurate.

- Ballot integrity starts with registration, a process to ensure that only eligible voters in each state can cast a ballot. 49 states require that potential voters attest to their voting eligibility (including citizenship), under penalty of perjury, to register to vote in all elections. Arizona is the only state that requires those seeking to vote in state or local elections to provide documentary proof of citizenship.
- There are safety and security measures in place to protect mail-in ballots and to ensure the signature on those ballots matches that of the person voting. States also verify mail-in ballot applications. Mail-in ballots are sent in envelopes that are typically marked with a unique serial number or barcode to ensure that only one valid ballot is returned per voter. Nearly every state offers ballot tracking for election officials and voters, which limits opportunities for ballots to be diverted while in transit between an election office and a voter.
- If a mail-in ballot is missing a signature or the signature does not match the one on file, some states give voters the opportunity to “cure” their ballots. Local election officials contact voters directly and ask them to verify their information and that they did in fact cast the ballot.
- If a voter submits more than one mail ballot or tries to vote in person after already voting by mail, only one ballot will be counted and the instance of double voting will be investigated.
- Teams of people work together at every step of the voting, counting, and reporting process, from checking voter eligibility, to confirming the accuracy of results from each voting location, to securely transporting ballots and other materials, to serving as independent observers.
- Every state allows for members of the public, or representatives from political parties, to be poll watchers. People of all party affiliations are subject to the same rules and regulations and have equal access to observe the vote count process. Check for what your state allows here: <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/policies-for-election-observers#table>
- Election officials have processes to verify the count. For example, they may conduct audits to make sure that the votes were counted accurately before being made official. In very close elections, they may conduct recounts following the laws in each state. After checking for accuracy and resolving any errors, the results are officially declared and certified.
- Ballots are counted using machines tested for accuracy and security before and after each election. Learn more about voting equipment testing at: <https://www.eac.gov/voting-equipment/system-certification-process>

- During the voting period, election officials have “chain of custody” procedures to maintain and document the location and status of ballots and voting equipment, ensuring that [all elements of the election system are accounted for](#). Voting systems must produce a [paper record for audits and recounts](#). Federal law requires election officials to [retain ballots](#) and other election-related material for 22 months after a federal election in case a recount or investigation needs to take place. In 2024, 95% of voters will likely vote on a [ballot with a voter-verifiable paper trail](#).
- In the post-election period, [48 states conduct a post-election audit](#). That audit might involve recounting a sample of ballots by hand to confirm that the outcome was correct.
- Read more in this recent explainer from the Bipartisan Policy Center, Issue One and the R Street Institute: [“United in Security: How Every State Protects Your Vote”](#)

On election night, you may hear the media or others report projections of election results based on partial counts or best guesses of results so far. The election results reported on election night are never the final, certified results. Even when results displayed on state elections sites say “100% of Precincts Reporting,” they are still unofficial and do not reflect 100 percent of the ballots cast, only that all precincts have reported some results.

While we all want to know the official results as soon as possible, results will only be official once state officials verify results from every jurisdiction, absentee ballots, military and overseas ballots, and provisional ballots. It’s better to be accurate than fast. A little patience gives us the peace of mind that results will be accurate. After the election, people might challenge the results. But our system requires proof and following the law.

What is the **Certification** Process?

While the public is often eager to learn the results of elections, the process of reporting initial results, verifying the vote count, and certifying the election takes a great deal of work and time. Accuracy is more important than speed. While the procedures vary from state to state, there are three essential stages to the process: reporting results; canvassing results; and certifying results.



Initial results reporting

- After the polls close, ballots and electronic vote records are securely transferred to the applicable election administration location for counting. Election officials make initial election results public as quickly as possible.
- However, even when those results say “100% of Precincts Reporting,” they are still unofficial. The election results reported on and after Election Night are never the final, certified results



Verifying the vote count through a canvass

- Local election officials in each locality conduct a canvass, which is a process to review, verify and consolidate election results from the individual precincts.
- The canvass allows election officials to confirm the accuracy of every eligible ballot cast and counted, including mail-in, uniformed and overseas citizen, early voting, Election Day, and provisional ballots, and to identify areas for improvement.



Certification

- Election certification refers to the process of election officials attesting that the tabulation and canvassing of the election are complete and that the election results are a true and accurate accounting of all votes cast in a particular election.
- After the canvass, election officials certify election results using a variety of methods. Some states authorize the canvass and certify election results through a local board, the Chief Election Official in the state, or a state canvassing board.
- Depending on the state, local election officials must complete the certification process within 30 days.
- In presidential elections, states then send their certified votes for president and vice president, as represented by their respective Electoral College votes, to Congress.

What is the **Electoral College?**

For the selection of the President of the United States, several federal mandates are in place to get election results from the states through the Electoral College process and then to Congress.

Voters in the United States actually vote for slates of electors for their state delegations who then vote in the Electoral College several weeks after the general election to choose the president. The Electoral College is a process (not a place) in which electors meet and vote for President and Vice President, and the counting of the electoral votes by Congress. There are 538 electors, one for each U.S. senator and U.S. representative, plus three for Washington, D.C. This system of using electors, known as the Electoral College, was established in the Constitution.

Among several other provisions to ensure transparency and security in the presidential selection process, the bipartisan [Electoral Count Reform and Presidential Transition Improvement Act](#) of 2022:

- Sets the elector meeting date as the first Tuesday after the second Wednesday in December.
- Mandates that a state executive (usually the governor) of each state send forward its slate of electors at least six days prior to the date on which the electors are to meet; and
- Requires the certificate of ascertainment (the official document identifying the slate of electors) to include a security feature.

Once the electors meet and send their votes to Congress, the Vice President counts these votes during a joint meeting of Congress. Any objections to the legality of the submission of the slate of electors from the states must be supported by one-fifth of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

As stated in the Constitution, the role of the Vice President in the certification of electors is purely ministerial. The Vice President acts as the presiding officer of the joint meeting of Congress during which the electors' votes are counted. The Vice President does not have any power to solely determine, accept, reject, or otherwise adjudicate disputes over electors.

Veterans and Military Families Messaging and Resources

Active-duty personnel, veterans, and military families know the sacrifices that preserving and protecting Americans' freedom to vote requires.

Across America, thousands of veterans have continued their legacy of service by volunteering as poll workers in their local communities, helping ensure the safety and security of our elections.

Meanwhile, there are specific challenges that military-connected voters face, from Permanent Change of Station orders that scramble voting locations to absentee voting deadlines for those deployed overseas to voting access considerations for veterans with disabilities.

These perspectives make veterans and military families important and trusted messengers to bolster confidence in the integrity of our elections and to share accurate information and materials about the voting process.

Below are a few messaging principles followed by trusted resources and links tailored for military-connected audiences. Along with the other resources and shareable content in this toolkit, they are designed to promote Americans' freedom to vote, demystify the election process, and strengthen confidence in the integrity and fairness of our elections.



Reminders About Election Integrity Messaging to Military-Connected Audiences:

- Emphasize the messenger's personal connection to veterans/military.
- Highlight shared values of "freedom" and "fairness".
- Humanize and offer a shared connection to election workers by highlighting that thousands of veterans and military family members are now serving as poll workers in communities across the nation.
- Be forward-looking and focus on our shared goals of ensuring the integrity of future elections instead of trying to re-fight misconceptions about past elections.



Resources

- [Voting resources for military-connected voters](#) created by the [Secure Families Initiative](#)
- [Vet the Vote](#) - a national campaign to recruit veterans and military family members to become the next generation of poll workers

Faith Messaging and Resources

A core takeaway from research on strengthening confidence in the integrity of the voting process and our elections is the importance of trusted and local messengers.

Faith leaders and faith-based organizations are among the most powerful and persuasive messengers, frequently embodying both the “trusted” and “local” components of the recommendation.

As a result, nonpartisan faith-based messengers can help dispel misconceptions and bolster confidence that our elections are fair, free, and secure by sharing accurate information and materials about the voting process and our elections. Houses of worship also already serve as safe and trusted civic spaces - there are more than 60,000 polling places in America and approximately 1-in-5 polling places are located in a house of worship.

Below are a few messaging principles followed by trusted, nonpartisan resources and links tailored for faith-based audiences. Along with the other resources and shareable content in this toolkit, they are designed to promote Americans’ freedom to vote, demystify the election process, and strengthen confidence in the integrity and fairness of our elections.



Reminders About Election Integrity Messaging to Faith Audiences:

- Personalize outreach to faith-based audiences, especially via faith-based messengers and their stories.
- Local faith messengers are powerful validators on behalf of local election processes and officials.
- Use shared religious texts to provide a reference point to help communities understand connections between faith and the values of our elections processes.
- Be forward-looking and focus on our shared goals of ensuring the integrity of future elections.



Resources

- [Faith in Elections Playbook](#), from Interfaith America and Protect Democracy
- [The Jewish Imperative to Protect and Strengthen American Democracy](#), a white paper from A More Perfect Union: The Jewish Partnership for Democracy
- Read more in [this Christianity Today article](#) about the nearly 13,000 houses of worship across America that serve as a polling location
- July 2024 op-ed in Arizona Republic: [“As Arizona pastors, we can’t let a GOP official use Christianity to ‘lynch’ someone”](#)
- June 2024 op-ed in Inside Philanthropy: [“Faith-Based Funding Can Help Protect Democracy”](#)
- July 2024 op-ed in Religion News Service: [“People of faith mobilize when our country needs us. This year, democracy needs us”](#)

Business Messaging and Resources

Democracy is a strong driver of a healthy economy. And businesses play a vital role in the health and strengthening of our democracy. Business leaders - from Main Street to Wall Street - have an important platform and network to promote confidence in the integrity of our elections, and to share accurate, nonpartisan information about voting and election processes.

Business leaders are credible because they have experience channeling conflict into compromise through focusing on practical solutions. In the Edelman Trust Index, “my employer” consistently ranks as the single most trusted institution, and businesses are seen as far more competent and ethical than the media or government. Given this credibility, some of these business voices can be important validators and vehicles for communicating on these issues in a hyper-partisan and politicized environment. Furthermore, local business representatives – and leaders in particular – often double as civic leaders and trusted local voices.

Whether the goal is to communicate accurate nonpartisan voting information to employees, or to engage trusted local and regional business voices through larger affiliates and organizations, this toolkit is designed to help. You’ll find messaging that includes clear information that is relevant nationally and in key states. This shareable content will help promote Americans’ freedom to vote, demystify the election process, and strengthen confidence in the integrity and fairness of our elections.

Below are a few messaging principles followed by trusted resources and links tailored for business audiences.



Reminders About Messaging to and from Business Audiences:

- When communicating to local audiences, emphasize the local presence and relationship that the business has with the community.
- Reinforce how election integrity and fair, free elections advance the business and economic interests of our nation (including “fair and free” economy overtones).
- Establish the connection between a stable and secure local economy and a stable and secure democracy.
- Focus on the shared goal of ensuring the integrity of future elections instead of trying to fight misconceptions about past elections.



Resources

- [Civic Alliance](#), a nonpartisan organization that catalyzes employee voter registration and GOTV programs and the [Civic Alliance 2024 Elections Toolkit](#)
- [Business for America](#), a coalition of civic-minded businesses working to help increase civic engagement, ensure election integrity, encourage bipartisanship in politics, and strengthen the health of our representative democracy.
- [Business and Democracy Initiative](#), a partnership of business leaders dedicated to protecting our democracy and rebuilding trust in democratic institutions.

Relevant Election Integrity Messaging – a “Fair and Legal and Good Election”

Recently, Donald Trump stated he would accept the results of the 2024 election if it’s “a **fair** and **legal** and **good** election.” Here’s why all Americans can feel confident in each of those components of our election integrity and why that formulation for gauging our elections may be useful to incorporate into related messaging:



FAIR

- Across America and in every state and county, we have built-in checks and balances and processes for verification and review before, during, and after a vote is cast
- Each state and local jurisdiction has teams of people from both parties involved in faithfully executing the procedures and tools to safeguard the voting process
- We are ever-improving our elections to add even more reforms and protections to ensure election security and accuracy in 2024 and beyond
- **If pressed:** No election will be watched more closely to ensure its fairness and integrity than this year’s contests



LEGAL

- America’s election system has multiple checks and balances at every level to ensure every eligible vote is counted accurately and securely
 - Ballots are counted using machines rigorously tested for accuracy and security before and after each election
 - Teams of people from both parties work together at every step of the voting, counting, and reporting process.
 - Teams of election officials go through a meticulous list of steps to make sure the correct results are made official
- **If pressed:** In every state and county, processes and laws are in place to ensure that only eligible voters can participate



GOOD

- As citizens, we have a voice that many people around the world do not.
- Americans can be proud that many state and local election officials work hard to ensure the integrity of our elections. In communities across America, tens of thousands of officials, workers, and volunteers work together and in bipartisan fashion to ensure that elections operate safely and securely
- This includes thousands of veterans, who have continued their legacy of service by volunteering as poll workers [if you have access to local stories/spotlights, suggestion to include “, as well as everyday Americans like PERSON/LOCATION/LINK”]
- Every eligible American citizen can be proud of their ability to participate in our system of representation. Our freedom to vote in fair and secure elections is the foundation of our system of self-governance.

To see an example of how the above messaging can be used:

See messaging below that incorporates elements of the above and could form the start of an op-ed or commentary:

Ensuring the integrity and accuracy of our elections is a goal every American can support.

Yet in a moment of heightened distrust and pervasive misinformation, how should we evaluate the integrity and fairness of our voting process and security and accuracy of our elections?

Recently, former President Trump stated he would accept the results of the 2024 election if it’s “a fair and legal and good election.”

It’s a helpful framework for evaluation **and** one that should bolster Americans’ confidence and pride in our election integrity.

See Social Graphics Below



Relevant Election Integrity Messaging – **the Change in the Democratic Nominee**

Following the news that President Joe Biden decided to drop out of the 2024 campaign, election officials and experts have been highlighting key messages to combat misinformation and disinformation and to reassure voters about the integrity of the election process. Below are key related messages and resources:

- **The right candidates will be on the ballot.** While this may feel like a late change, ballots aren't usually printed until the early Fall after both parties have held their conventions. As [election officials](#) remind us, American voters in all 50 states will still have the opportunity to vote for the eventual Democratic nominee in the upcoming presidential election.
- **Elections across the country are run by professionals.** Voters can remain confident that trained officials will ensure safe and secure elections that follow the law. The local officials around the country who run elections in their communities are ready and prepared to ensure that ballots are printed accurately and to ensure that all eligible voters will be able to cast their ballot in November.
- **Well within the rules.** The Democrats will choose their nominee at their convention in August as planned, just as the Republicans picked their nominee at their convention in July.
- **Beware of politicized disinformation:** Messaging that questions the legality of a candidate dropping out or that threatens a lawsuit as a result of the candidate selection process are advancing a political message that seeks to undermine voter trust.



Additional Resources

- **Secure Democracy USA** released [a roundup of quotes from top election officials across the political spectrum](#), making clear that American voters in all 50 states will have the opportunity to vote for the eventual Democratic nominee in the upcoming presidential election.
- **The National Task Force on Election Crises** [issued a statement](#) with accompanying resources on candidate successions.
- The bipartisan and nonpartisan election officials who are members of **Issue One's Faces of Democracy campaign** [issued a statement](#).
- Local election officials are trusted sources of information about how elections work. Go to www.howelectionswork.org to be directed to state election officials across the country.

Glossary of Terms

Absentee Ballot: An absentee ballot—also known as a mail-in ballot—is submitted by a voter who is either unable to vote in-person on Election Day or who prefers to vote-by-mail. Specific rules vary by state, as some states require an excuse for absentee voting while others offer vote-by-mail for all voters. No matter the state, election officials have checks and balances to verify the identity of the voter as well as training and safeguards to prevent attempted fraud.

Absentee Ballot Application: Absentee/mail-in ballot applications require voters to provide identifying information to have a ballot sent to them. Election officials use that information to verify the voter’s identity and eligibility before sending out the ballot.

Accessible Ballot: For eligible voters requesting disability accommodations, there is the option to request an accessible ballot. This usually refers to the equipment, support, and/or other assistance to support that individual’s ability to vote.

Audit: A post-election audit is part of the system of checks and balances that ensures the accuracy of vote counts and voting systems administering the election. A random sample of paper ballots is compared to the electronic results to ensure they match. Audits are open to the public and often have observers from political parties present.

Canvass: A canvass is how election officials verify the votes counted and confirm all the data generated during an election cycle is accurate. During the canvass, election officials check for duplicates, verify voter status, and give voters a chance to rectify mistakes that might otherwise disqualify their ballot.

Certification: Election certification refers to the process of election officials attesting that the tabulation and canvassing of an election are complete and that the election results are a true and accurate accounting of all votes cast.

Chain of Custody: The chain of custody is an audit path, embodying a series of safety checks used by every state and jurisdiction during the election process to secure and document when election materials, such as ballots and voting equipment, are transferred from one owner to another, in order to be able to verify that they have been in secure hands from the beginning to the end of the electoral process.

Cured Ballot: Some states provide the opportunity for voters to “cure” any issues that would otherwise cause a ballot to be rejected. This process allows voters to address problems such as missing signatures or signature mismatches. These voters are not able to change their choices on their ballot during the curing process.

Disinformation: False information knowingly or deliberately spread.

Drop Box: A drop box is a secure, locked structure operated by election officials where voters may deliver their completed ballots up to the time polls close on Election Day.

ECA (Electoral Count Act): An 1887 law that governs the process for how the Electoral College selects the president and vice president and the role of Congress in tallying electoral votes.

ECRA, (Electoral Count Reform Act): The ECRA of 2022 seeks to clarify provisions in the original 1887 ECA law governing the transmission of federal election results to Congress. Reforms in the ECRA include measures to strengthen election integrity, promote transparency and confidence in results, and reduce incentives for losing candidates to try and throw out electoral votes.

Elector: Refers to an individual who officially casts one of their state’s votes for president at their state’s

meeting of electors.

Electoral College: A system designated by the Constitution to select the president and vice president of the United States. Each of the 50 states is allocated presidential electors equal to the number of its representatives and senators, and the District of Columbia receives three electors of its own. A presidential candidate must receive a majority of the electoral votes cast to win the election. State legislators award their slate of electoral votes to the presidential candidate based on their state's popular vote, though Maine and Nebraska apportion based on congressional district.

EMS (Election Management System): A phrase referring to technology and software that support the administration of elections and processing of results. While the EMS specifics vary by state, every state relies on safeguards and audits to ensure integrity and security.

HAVA (Help America Vote Act): A 2002 federal law that established a program to provide federal funds to states and territories to upgrade voting systems and improve the administration of federal elections.

MFA (Multi Factor Authentication): is a multi-step process to protect election infrastructure, such as voter registration databases, and to safeguard against malicious actors. MFA requires more than one authentication factor for a user to verify their identity in order to log into an account.

Misinformation: False information that is not intentionally misleading.

Precinct: Sections that a town or city are divided into when people vote in an election. Election day precincts each have a respective polling place. In some jurisdictions, other terms such as "ward" or "division" are used for the same concept.

Provisional Ballots: Provisional ballots provide both protections for the integrity of an election and a voter's freedom to participate. In the case that a voter's eligibility to vote cannot be verified at a polling place, the voter is allowed to cast a provisional ballot. Election officials will first conduct additional verification to ensure the voter's eligibility before the provisional ballot can be counted.

Recount: If an election ends in a close contest or, in some states, if requested by an eligible entity, a recount process commences to corroborate the accuracy of certified election results. Specific thresholds and rules for recounts vary by state.

How to **Vote**

How to Get & Cast a Ballot in Your State

For a full, state-by-state breakdown of how to get and cast a ballot in your state, visit [vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov).

How Elections Work in Your State

Visit www.Howelectionswork.org and click on your state to be directed to the most trusted source of election information near you.