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You've focused largely (but not exclusively of course) on voting rights-type issues. How, if at all, will Bolts coverage of election administration change in the next 2-4 years?

At Bolts, we've taken a large view of covering voting rights and democracy. Our stories cover visible policy areas (say the laws around mail voting, anxieties over certification, the rules of felony disenfranchisement) but we also ask how these matters affect other issue areas (for instance, how a redistricting lawsuit in Georgia may affect energy policies) to make them feel more concrete and take the time to explore the ramifications of seemingly-arcane policies on people's lives. We're also interested in people's lived experience of what democracy is. I'll flag one of [our bigger features of 2024](#), which was about how an expansion of automatic voter registration in Colorado will affect Native communities, and also how this connects to a legacy of violence on these Native land as an example that does a lot of this. We expect to continue pursuing these goals over the next few years! And while a lot will change with the new federal administration, we'll still be primarily interested in how those changes affect state and local landscapes—much like we've been in recent years. (I'll add that our main north star is to start with the local and state, rather than the federal: not because the latter doesn't matter, but because the former is what is harder for people with an interest in election administration to navigate and follow.)

Do you see Bolts covering elections more in the coming years?

Covering elections is already an important (though by no means exclusive) part of our work at Bolts—and we treat off-year races as just as important as presidential cycles. In 2023, the last odd-numbered year, for instance, we closely covered the implications for election administration of Pennsylvania's supreme court race, and of the county board elections in Pennsylvania; we also covered how felony disenfranchisement rules in Virginia and Kentucky were affecting that year's elections in those states. Relatedly, policy changes that will be adopted in legislative sessions in 2025 will matter a great deal come the fall of 2026 and 2028. That's all to say: Covering local and state politics means being acutely aware that the election calendar is ongoing; and that the races, policies, reforms, and debates that take place many months before "the big" election are very important to report on; so we will continue with those commitments.

What do you think will be the biggest stories--election administration-wise of course--in the next 2-4 years?

Let's start with the obvious: The Trump administration has signaled it has plans to push for changes to election rules, and potentially to engage in investigations into past elections, with or without the assistance of state governments. What that looks like, and the consequences for local election administration and people's right to the ballot, is bound to be a major story in coming years. The overlap between election administration and the criminal justice system (through the state landscape on felony disenfranchisement, through policies around jail voting, through investigations against voters or election administrators) has also been a big topic of

coverage at Bolts, and we expect that to remain very important in coming years. We're also interested in the innovations that have been brought to voter registration policies in recent years, with some states trying out different ways to automate or ease registration; how will those spread, and what effects will we see them as having a few years down the line? Another set of laws are the 'Voting Rights Acts' that are being passed at the state level in some places: what'll be the fate of the lawsuits they are facing, and what will be the impact they have on election administration? This gets to a related, broader issue: the degree to which state institutions step in for the roles that the federal government was playing: One area we cover at Bolts are state supreme courts, which are seeing a lot of litigation around election laws, and we'll be watching very closely how state jurisprudence evolves in coming years on voting rights.

The media focus on elections officials was pretty intense the past few years, but I would suspect a lot of that will die down. That's good and bad of course. What advice would you give to state and local elections officials to stay engaged with the media?

That's an interesting question! I would say Bolts may be atypical in that covering voting rights and election administration at the local and state level is half of our mission (the other half is coverage of criminal justice policies), so we at least do not need convincing that these issues are important, and that the time to cover them is now—that that these issues won't take a back seat until the fall of 2026, that questions of staffing, funding, access, and more are critical long before the final stretch of a campaign. So I would stress the importance of that perspective and the value of investing in beat reporting and regular coverage on these topics.