

**We all** have a role to play in keeping our elections free and fair. Voting is the greatest power most Americans have and it is almost always a positive and rewarding experience.

Yet, some voters will likely encounter challenges this November.

Local election officials work hard to make sure elections run smoothly, but **they can't do it alone**.

**You** can have a huge impact by keeping informed, getting involved, speaking out and, most importantly, voting.

Here are concrete steps you can take – as an **individual voter**, a **community member** and an **American citizen** – to protect your right to vote.

Use the QR codes and website URLs throughout to find the resources and tools you need.

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## AS AN INDIVIDUAL VOTER

### MAKE A PLAN AND BE PREPARED:

- **Check your voter registration.** Is it up to date? [Vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov) will get you to the right place.
- **Know your voting options and requirements.** Rules might have changed since the last election.
- **Make a plan for how and when to vote**, whether in person, early or by mail.
- **Have a backup plan** in case of an emergency.
- **Track your mail ballot and application** if your state allows.



Get ready



2

### IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG:

- **Turn to trusted sources for election-related information.** Your local election office is a great place to start. [Vote411.org](https://www.vote411.org) will direct you to your state's election information.
- **Remember your rights.** No one is allowed to intimidate you or interfere with your vote. Voters with disabilities or language needs are entitled to help.
- **Know your options.** There are alternative ways to vote if you run into problems. If your registration information is missing or incorrect, you can cast a provisional ballot. If voting machines break, ask for a paper ballot. If you make a mistake, get a new ballot. If you are in line when polls close, stay there until you get to vote.
- **Report intimidation** to local election officials or law enforcement. You can also contact nonpartisan monitors such as Election Protection: **1-866-OUR-VOTE** or [866ourvote.org](https://www.866ourvote.org).
- **Fix mistakes or "cure" your mail ballot**, if allowed in your state, to make sure it counts.



Your rights



"Curing"

3

## AS A COMMUNITY MEMBER

### PROMOTE FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS:

- **Sign up to be a poll worker at your local election office.** Or go to [powerthepolls.org](https://www.powerthepolls.org). Almost every election office needs them.
- **Be an observer at the polls or a ballot counting location.** Observers are often appointed by a campaign or political party to monitor the voting process.
- **Watch pre-election testing of voting machines or post-election audits.** Contact your local election office to see if they allow this. Some also give tours.
- **Engage with local government officials on how elections are run.** Go to public meetings. Express your opinion.



Sign up

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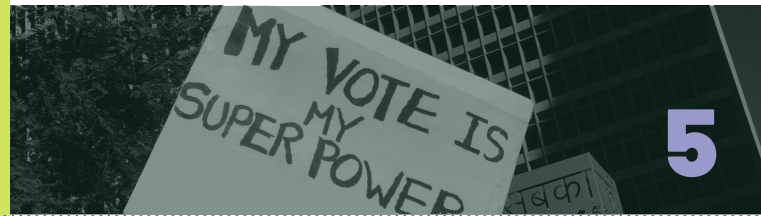
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- **Learn how the voting process is supposed to work** so you can know if something is going wrong and how to report problems.
- **Keep up with election news and know which media sources you can trust.** Be wary of information from unknown individuals. The closer an election is the more likely you will encounter rumors and false information.  News literacy
- **Share what you learn with friends and neighbors.** Encourage them to check their registration and make a plan to vote.
- **Build coalitions with others in your community** – perhaps at your church, school or neighborhood association – to discuss how elections are run and votes protected.
- **Speak out if you believe election officials and the voting process are unfairly attacked.** Write a letter to the editor or call in to a radio show. Post your comments on social media.





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## AS AN AMERICAN CITIZEN


### SUPPORT VOTING RIGHTS:

- **Stay informed about what Congress, top election officials and state legislatures are doing** to impact how elections are run. Check [Votebeat.org](http://Votebeat.org) and [electionline.org](http://electionline.org). Contact lawmakers and express your opinions on pending legislation.
- **Keep up with the latest legal action.** Many disagreements about how elections are run end up in court, often at the last minute. This could affect how you cast your ballot and whether it will count.  Legal action
- **Counter unjustified efforts to undermine public confidence in elections by speaking out.** If you believe voting is accurate and fair, say so publicly. Share your thoughts with people you know and those influencing the debate.
- **Consider providing financial support** or joining groups that work to protect elections.
- **Be vigilant.** Watch for suspicious or threatening activity. Bring concerns to state or local authorities. *Call 911 if you see or experience violence.*

6

- **Learn your rights if observing law enforcement or military activities.** It is highly unlikely, but you could encounter such activity at or near a polling place, despite laws prohibiting interference. Know the legal limits of responding. You can generally observe and express your opinion, but not interfere.  Your rights
- **Check the rules for recording.** Some incidents might motivate you to collect evidence to share with law enforcement, election officials or the media. Most polling places prohibit cell phones or recording inside to protect voters' privacy.
- **Avoid escalating confrontations.** Lower the temperature if possible by listening to those you disagree with and, if needed, turn the dispute over to election officials or other trusted authorities.  De-escalation
- **Whatever you do, do not interfere with someone's ability to vote.** That is illegal.
- **Finally, celebrate voting.** Proudly wear your "I voted" sticker. Go to the polls with friends. Make clear this is a vital civic duty, well worth protecting.

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# PROTECT YOUR VOTE

## A Citizen's Guide



RESOURCES YOU NEED TO PROTECT YOUR VOTE

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