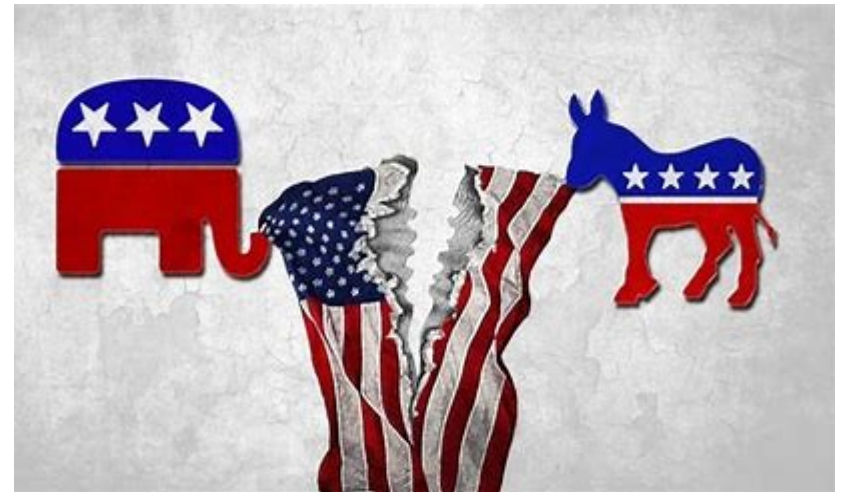


Challenges & Controversies to Voting Rights

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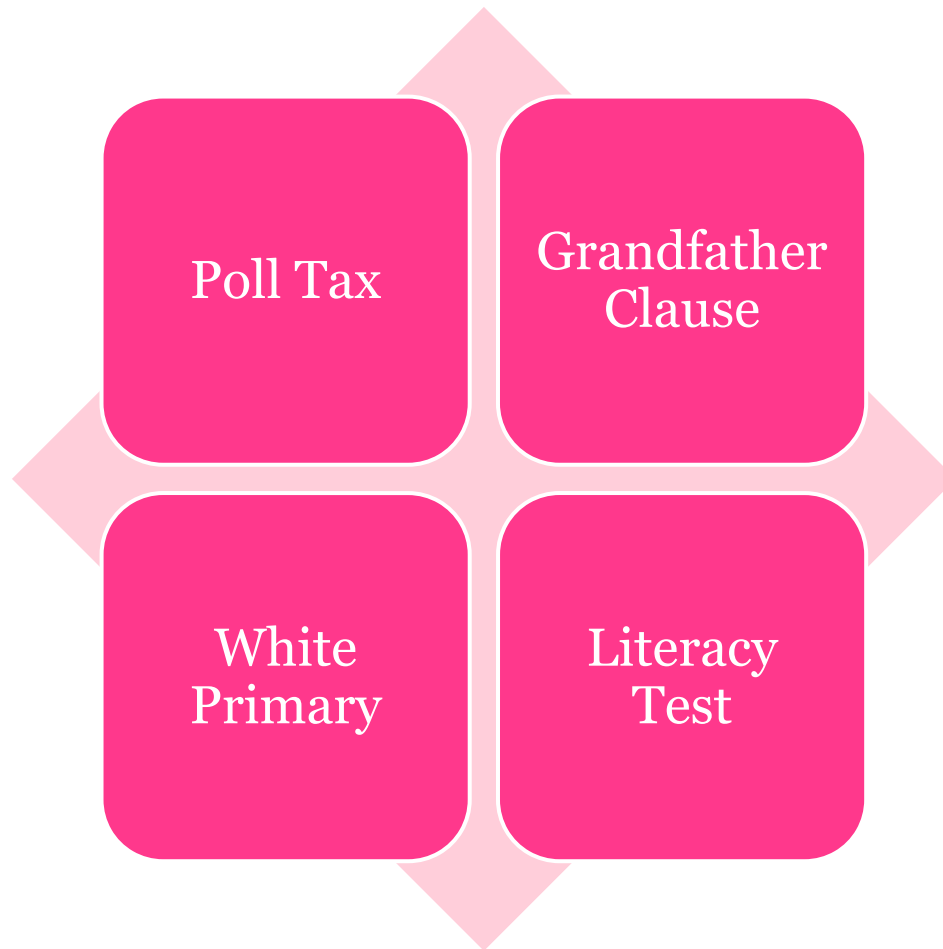


Voting Rights Act of 1965



- Made it Illegal to interfere with anyone's right to vote.
- Abolished the literacy tests.
- Sent in Federal Registrars to Counties where less than 50% of VAP was registered.
- Pre-Clearance by DOJ or the U.S. District Court for DC.

Historical Barriers to Black Voters



Shelby County v. Holder (2013)

5-4

A central portion of the Voting Rights Act is unconstitutional



Kennedy Roberts Alito Scalia Thomas



Kagan Sotomayor Breyer Ginsburg



RBG's Dissent



- Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's dissent:
- "throwing out preclearance when it has worked and is continuing to work to stop discriminatory changes is like throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet."

Restrictive Voting Laws Enacted Since 2020 in Effect for the Midterms

EFFECT ON VOTING	BILL NUMBERS
Shorten window to apply for a mail ballot	AL H.B. 538, AR S.B. 643, GA S.B. 202, IA S.F. 413, KY H.B. 574, NY S.B. 264, OK H.B. 2663, SC S.B. 108
Restrict assistance in returning a voter's mail ballot	AR H.B. 1715, FL S.B. 90, IA S.F. 413, IA S.F. 568, KS H.B. 2183, KY H.B. 574, SC S.B. 108, TX S.B. 1
Limit the number, location, or availability of mail ballot drop boxes	FL S.B. 90, GA S.B. 202, IA S.F. 413, IN S.B. 398, MO H.B. 1878, SC S.B. 108
Eliminate or limit sending mail ballot applications or mail ballots to voters who do not specifically request them	FL S.B. 90, GA S.B. 202, IA S.F. 413, TX S.B. 1
Impose stricter signature requirements for mail ballots	AZ S.B. 1003, ID H.B. 290, KS H.B. 2183, TX S.B. 1
Shorten deadline to deliver mail ballot	AR S.B. 643, IA S.F. 413
Make it harder to remain on absentee voting lists	FL S.B. 90
Impose harsher voter ID requirements	AR H.B. 1112, AR H.B. 1244, FL S.B. 90, GA S.B. 202, MO H.B. 1878, MT S.B. 169, NH S.B. 418, NH H.B. 523, OK H.B. 3364, SC S.B. 108, TX S.B. 1, WY H.B. 75
Make voter registration more difficult	IA S.F. 413, FL S.B. 90, KS H.B. 2332, MS H.B. 1510, MT S.B. 169, MT H.B. 176, NH S.B. 523, TX S.B. 1111
Expand voter purges or risk faulty voter purges	IA S.F. 413, KY H.B. 574, NH S.B. 31, SC S.B. 108, TX S.B. 1111, UT H.B. 12
Increase barriers for voters with disabilities	AL H.B. 285, IA S.F. 568, MO H.B. 1878, TX H.B. 3920, TX S.B. 1
Reduce polling place availability (locations or hours)	IA S.F. 413, MT S.B. 196, TX S.B. 1
Limit early voting days or hours	GA S.B. 202, IA S.F. 413, TX S.B. 1
Ban snacks and water to voters waiting in line	FL S.B. 90, GA S.B. 202

Motivation Behind Anti-Voter Laws

- More than 400 restrictive voter laws have been introduced in state legislatures, to date. (since 2021)
- Ensure election integrity
- To guarantee political advantages for their party
- Deny Americans of color and women access to the ballot to diminish their growing political power



THE SAVE ACT

- Forcing citizens to:
- Appear in-person to register to vote and update their voter registration — essentially eliminating online and by-mail options
- Present a birth certificate or passport that matches their current legal name
- Further limiting access to voter registration by:
- Gutting popular state programs for automatic voter registration, such as registering eligible people when updating their driver's license
- Decreasing the effectiveness of voter registration drives nationwide (League of Conservation voters)

Voters at Risk with SAVE ACT

- Military voters, Tribal voters, and rural voters who live far from polling locations and rely on online and mail-in registration.
- People without passports.
- Married people who have changed their name.
- Low-income voters who may not be able to afford these pricy forms of ID.
- Survivors of natural disasters who may have recently lost their documentation. (LCV website)

Other Means of Controlling Voting

- Poll Closures and Unequal Wait Times
- Purging Voter Rolls
- Registration Laws



Implications of these laws

- “Substantial drops in turnout for minorities, women, and the elderly under strict voter ID laws.”
- Weighs disproportionately on minorities living in poverty, with many having to travel as much as 200 to 250 miles round trip to secure state ID’s.
- Could minimize the influence of voters on the left and could dramatically alter the political leaning of the electorate.
- Cause people to just give up and not vote. Suppress the power of the people.



Voter ID Laws and Voter Fraud

- According to Zoltan Hajnal, et al, “Voter ID laws clearly target racial minorities: the strictest photo ID laws are passed almost exclusively in states controlled by Republicans, and in states where minorities represent a larger share of the population.”
- “In spite of the lack of evidence of voter fraud, accusations of fraud and electoral irregularities have grown more central to Donald Trump’s claims (echoed by some Republican elites and large segments of Trump’s followers) that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from him, his efforts to overturn the results of that contest, and his reluctance to support a peaceful transition of power -- the hallmark of every true democracy.”
- “The false claims and the intense divisions they have created put our democracy more at risk than at almost any other time in our history” (Zoltan, Hajnal L, Vincent L. Hutchings, and Taeku Lee, 2024).

60 Years Later, Still Fighting!



State of the Union, 2013



"Defending our freedom, though, is not just the job of our military alone. We must all do our part to make sure our God-given rights are protected here at home. That includes one of the most fundamental right of a democracy: the right to vote.

When any American, no matter where they live or what their party, are denied that right because they can't afford to wait for five or six or seven hours just to cast their ballot, we are betraying our ideals."

SC: Current Voting Controversy

- Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibits racial discrimination in election practices.
- Plaintiffs in *Louisiana vs. Callais* argue that a redrawn map in 2022 violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution because race was a guiding consideration in redistricting (oyez,2025).

- Race and Representation
- Scholars contend that the court could strike down Sec. 2 as unconstitutional or strike down the map in question but preserve Sec. 2.



Louisiana v. Callais

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act has long been a guardrail against states "packing" Black voters into districts and "cracking" communities of color into other districts with an aim of diluting their electoral influence (oyez, 2025).

Things We Can Do

- Informed Citizens are Democracy's best Defense
 - Vote for Feminist Candidates
 - Challenge mis/dis information with Facts
 - Organize, Mobilize, Verify your Registration Often
 - Serve as poll workers and monitors

we should be doing everything we can to *encourage*, rather than hinder, *participation* in our democracy.

#LETPEOPLEVOTE

EMPOWER
OTHERS TO VOTE!



#READYTOVOTE2024



Works Cited

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- League of Conservation Voter's Website (2025) [The SAVE Act Status: Now is the Time to Stop it in the Senate](#)
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Zoltan, Hajnal L, Vincent L. Hutchings, and Taeku Lee (2024). [Race and Inequality in American Politics: An Imperfect Union](#). Harvard Press.