



Voting Rights in Ohio

Young people and historically marginalized communities have called for bold democracy reform and an expansion of voting rights in Ohio and across the country. In order to protect the integrity of elections and ensure broad civic participation by young people, rural communities, people with low-incomes, and Black, Native, Latinx, and other communities of color, we must dismantle barriers to the ballot box and harmful policies that disenfranchise our communities.

How Can You Vote In Ohio?

- ★ To register to vote in Ohio, you must meet these requirements¹
 - Be a citizen of the United States
 - Be at least 18 years old on or before the next General Election
 - Be a resident of Ohio for at least 30 days immediately before the election in which you want to vote
 - Not currently incarcerated (in jail or prison) for a felony conviction. People with prior felonies are eligible to vote in Ohio but are required to reregister.
 - Not have been declared incompetent for voting purposes by a probate court
 - Not have been permanently denied the right to vote for violations of election laws

What Do You Need To Vote?²

- ★ Ohio driver's license number
- ★ The last four digits of your Social Security number
- ★ A copy of current and valid photo identification, a military identification, or a current (within the last 12 months) utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or another government document (other than a notice of voter registration mailed by a board of elections) that shows the voter's name and current address

Dates for 2020 Elections in Ohio³

- ★ February 18: Last day to register to vote
- ★ February 19: Early voting begins

¹ Voting Eligibility & Residency Requirements. Frank LaRose Ohio Secretary of State. Accessed April 14, 2020. <https://www.ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/voter-eligibility-residency-reqs/>.

² Early Voting Begins for 2020 Primary Election in Ohio. ABC 6 Your Side. Accessed April 14, 2020. <https://abc6onyourside.com/news/local/early-voting-begins-for-2020-primary-election-in-ohio>.

³ Ibid



- ★ March 14: Last day to request a ballot in order to vote by mail
- ★ March 16: Ballot needs to be postmarked
- ★ March 17: Ohio Primary Election
- ★ As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all of Ohio's polling locations were not open for in-person voting on the scheduled Primary Election Day, which was on March 17, 2020. Governor Mike DeWine signed a bill which extended absentee voting by mail only until April 28th.⁴
- ★ Voting rights groups including the League of Women Voters and the ACLU of Ohio filed a lawsuit challenging Ohio's new primary, citing that voters of color, low-income voters, voters with disabilities, students, and young people will be disproportionately impacted and disenfranchised. The Courts ultimately decided not to change the State's amended plan for the Primary Election.⁵

Who Does Voter Identification Requirements Leave Out?

- ★ Incarcerated Individuals
 - While granting the right to vote to people with prior felonies is important, incarcerated individuals should also be granted this right.
 - Disenfranchising incarcerated individuals creates a class of people still subject to the laws of the United States and left without a voice in the way they're represented and governed.
- ★ Transgender people whose photo identification might not match their name
 - Ohio is one of six other states that have removed what the state deems as 'inactive' voters who do not return a postal mail residency check. This is practiced is referred to as purging, which can exclude many transgender people and other marginalized communities that face high rates of housing insecurity.⁶
- ★ Folks with low-incomes
 - Obtaining an ID costs money, and therefore is not accessible to everyone. 11% of U.S. citizens have reported to not have government-issued photo identification because of the cost being a barrier.⁷

⁴ Ohio Lawmakers Extend Primary to April 28 With No In-Person Voting; Voting Rights Groups Protest. Cleveland Scene. Accessed April 14, 2020.

<https://www.cleveland.com/scene-and-heard/archives/2020/03/26/ohio-lawmakers-extend-primary-to-april-28-with-no-in-person-voting-voter-rights-groups-protest>

⁵ Statement from Plaintiffs and Their Attorneys in League of Women's Voters V. LaRose. League of Women Voters. Accessed April 14, 2020.

<https://lwvohio.salsalabs.org/statementapril3?wpId=e265e52e-ab74-420a-a2e5-cfe006170537>

⁶ Trans Voters Will Be Disenfranchised in 2020 Unless We Take Action. Human Rights Watch. Accessed April 14, 2020. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/26/trans-voters-will-be-disenfranchised-2020-unless-we-take-action>.

⁷ Brennan Center for Justice, Citizens without Proof: A Survey of Americans' Possession of Documentary Proof of Citizenship and Photo Identification, (New York: Brennan Center for Justice, 2006). Accessed April 14, 2020.



- People who rely on public transportation, do not have access to cars, and overall have limited access to transportation to a polling location are likely to not vote.
- People who work during polling office hours may not be able to afford to take a day off, find child care, arrange transportation, and more.
- ★ Voter identification requirements place serious barriers on the constitutional right to vote, which every American citizen is granted.

Ohioans For Fair and Safe Elections Ballot Initiative: What is it?

- ★ An effort to build a broad coalition of progressive organizations that are striving to make voting more accessible and secure for all Ohioans by passing a state constitutional amendment in 2020.⁸
- ★ In early March, the Ohio Ballot Board voted 3-2 Republican majority vote, to split the ballot initiative into four different issues, citing that it invalidated the single subject rule.⁹
- ★ On March 5, the Ohioans for Secure and Fair Elections coalition filed a complaint with the Ohio Supreme Court appealing the Ballot Boards decision to split the pro-democracy amendment into four different issues.¹⁰
- ★ On April 14, the Ohio Supreme Court overturned the Ballot Board's attempt to split the constitutional amendment into 4 separate issues. The Ohioans for Secure and Fair Elections coalition is suing the State of Ohio to amend the state's requirements for signature collection during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹

Ohioans For Fair and Safe Elections Ballot Initiative: What would it do?¹²

- ★ Ensure military service members and overseas citizens receive their ballots in time for their votes to count.

http://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/d/download_file_39242.pdf, 1.

⁸ Statement from Ohioans for Secure and Fair Elections. ACLU Ohio. Accessed April 14, 2020.

<https://www.acluohio.org/archives/press-releases/statement-from-ohioans-for-secure-and-fair-elections>.

⁹ Ballot Board Splits Voter Rights Amendment Into Four Issues. WOSU Public Media. Access April 14, 2020.

<https://radio.wosu.org/post/ballot-board-splits-voter-rights-amendment-four-issues>.

¹⁰ Ohioans for Secure and Elections Challenge Ballot Board Decision in Ohio Supreme Court Case and Refile Petitions with Ohio AG. ACLU Ohio. Accessed April 14, 2020.

<https://www.acluohio.org/archives/press-releases/ohioans-for-secure-and-fair-elections-challenge-ballot-board-decision-in-ohio-supreme-court-and-refile-petitions-with-ohio-ag>.

¹¹ Ohio Supreme Court Overturns State Ballot Board's Four-Way Split of Voting Measure. Columbus Dispatch. Accessed April 17, 2020.

<https://www.dispatch.com/news/20200414/ohio-supreme-court-overturns-state-ballot-board-s-quos-four-way-split-of-voting-measure>

¹² Ohio Voting Requirements Initiative 2020. Ballotpedia. Accessed April 14, 2020.

[https://ballotpedia.org/Ohio_Voting_Requirements_Initiative_\(2020\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Ohio_Voting_Requirements_Initiative_(2020)).



- ★ Guarantee the right to vote early, starting 28 days before an election, and ensuring voting locations are open on the two weekends before Election Day.
- ★ Keep voter rolls up to date by automatically registering eligible citizens to vote when doing business with the BMV.
- ★ Ensure voters with disabilities have equal access to the ballot box.
- ★ Ensure the accuracy and integrity of elections by auditing election results.
- ★ Allow eligible citizens to register and vote at polling locations during early voting and on Election Day.
- ★ Modernize our elections and allow voters to register to vote and cast a ballot beginning the 28th day before an election and continuing through Election Day.

Recommendations

- ★ Pass and implement changes outlined in the Ohioans for Fair and Safe Elections Ballot Initiative
- ★ Make Election Day and state and national holiday
- ★ Lower the voting age to 16 years old
- ★ Restore voting rights to people with previous felony convictions
- ★ Remove voter identification laws
- ★ Create