

RESOURCE

Congress Could Change Everything

Forty-three states are trying to enact legislation that could make it harder to vote. The Senate can stop voter suppression by passing the For the People Act, which recently passed the House.

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America is facing an overwhelming legislative assault on voting rights.

As of February 19, [more than 253 bills](#) restricting voting access had been carried over, prefiled, or introduced in 43 states, and the number is rising. Already, two of [these bills](#) have passed, and many are moving aggressively through state legislatures. Fueled by the Big Lie of widespread voter fraud and often discriminatory in design, these bills have the potential to dramatically reduce voting access, especially for Black and brown voters.

This [legislative campaign to suppress the vote](#) can — and must — be stopped by Congress. The Brennan Center has analyzed each of the restrictive voting bills pending in the states and concludes that The For the People Act (H.R. 1/S. 1) would thwart virtually every single one. The For the People Act, which passed the United States House of Representatives in early March, is a transformative bill that would expand voting rights and strengthen our democracy.

The landmark legislation would create a national baseline for voting access that every American can rely on, and it would foil state efforts to manipulate voting rules to exclude eligible voters or create [discriminatory outcomes](#). As President Biden [said](#) on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday, the For the People Act is “urgently needed to protect the right to vote, the integrity of our elections, and to repair and strengthen our democracy.” Along with the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, it includes all of the critical reforms needed to prevent voter suppression. Amidst a withering attack on voting rights in nearly every state, the Senate must now get to work and [pass this bill into law](#).

The table below outlines each of the major themes of the pending state voter suppression bills and explains how the For the People Act would address them.

How the For the People Act Would Thwart State Vote Suppression Legislation

RESTRICTIVE BILLS INTRODUCED	STATES	DOES THE FOR THE PEOPLE ACT ADDRESS THIS FOR FEDERAL ELECTIONS?
Limit who can vote by mail	AL, AZ, CO, GA, MN, MO, MS, MT, ND, OK, PA, SC, WA	Yes, it would require national no-excuse voting by mail.
Eliminate or reduce permanent absentee or early voting lists	AZ, FL, HI, NJ, NV, PA	Yes, it would require that states, at the option of a voter, treat a vote by mail application as an application to vote by mail in all future federal elections.
Eliminate or limit sending absentee ballots to voters who do not specifically request those ballots	AZ, CT, NJ, NY, OK, PA, WA	No.
Eliminate or limit sending absentee ballot applications to voters who do not specifically request those applications	CT, GA, IA, IL, ND, SD, TN, TX	Yes, it would require that states transmit absentee ballot applications to all registered voters.
Restrict who can assist in returning a voter's ballot	AK, AZ, CT, KS, KY, MD, MN, NY, OK	Yes, it would prohibit states from placing limits on how many absentee ballots a person can return on behalf of others.
Tighten witness signature requirements for mail ballots	AK, AZ, CA, MS, SC, VA	Yes, it would prohibit witness signature requirements for absentee ballots.
Restrict where and how voters may return absentee ballots	AZ, GA, MO, NH, PA, VA	Yes, it would require that voters be allowed to return absentee ballots by mail, at a polling place, at a tribally designated building, at a drop-box, or at a state or local election office.
Tighten signature matching requirements for ballots	CT, PA, SC	Yes, it would require giving voters notice and opportunity to cure signature defects, and that all determinations of a discrepancy be made by two trained election officials.
Tighten or impose ballot receipt deadlines	AZ, IA, IL, KS, PA	Yes, it would require that states accept eligible absentee ballots up to 10 days after Election Day.
Eliminate or limit early voting	GA, MN, MO, MT, ND, TN, WA	Yes, it would require a minimum of 14 consecutive days of early voting.



RESTRICTIVE BILLS INTRODUCED	STATES	DOES THE FOR THE PEOPLE ACT ADDRESS THIS FOR FEDERAL ELECTIONS?
Tighten or impose voter ID requirements	AK, AR, AZ, CT, FL, GA, ID, MA, ME, MN, MO, MS, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OK, PA, TX, VA, WY	Yes, it would require states to accept a sworn written statement in lieu of documentary ID (except for certain first-time voters).
Require documentary proof of citizenship to register to vote	AZ, IN, MI, NY, TX	Yes, it would require that states accept voter registrations that meet the current legal requirements (under the National Voter Registration Act), which do not include citizenship documents.
Eliminate or prevent same-day voter registration	AZ, CT, HI, MT, NH, VA	Yes, it would require same-day voter registration.
Eliminate or prevent automatic voter registration	AK, AZ, GA, NJ	Yes, it would require automatic voter registration.
Expand voter purges	AL, AZ, CA, HI, MI, MO, MS, NH, NJ, PA, SC, SD, TX, UT	Yes, it would: prohibit purges based solely on unreliable evidence like past failure to vote; prohibit voter caging; and limit inaccurate purges based on interstate cross-checks.

The **John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act** [would also address many](#) of these bills to the extent that they are discriminatory. It would modernize the Voting Rights Act and restore the requirement that certain states and localities with a history of voting discrimination get prior federal approval — or “preclearance” — of any changes to their voting rules and practices to make sure that they are

not discriminatory. It would also require all jurisdictions in the country to submit for preclearance any “covered practices,” meaning those practices, such as strict voter ID laws and polling place closures in communities of color, that have typically been implemented for a discriminatory purpose or have had discriminatory effects.

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