

## **States That Expanded Voting Since the 2012 Election**

After long lines marred the 2012 election, dozens of states introduced legislation to improve access to the polls. Overall, laws to expand voting have now passed in 26 states plus the District of Columbia.

[Click here](#) for an interactive version of this page. Also see our comprehensive roundups of voting laws in [2013](#), [2014](#), [2015](#), and [2016](#).

### **Here are more details on those expansive laws:**

- **California** – In 2014, a Democratic-controlled legislature passed laws to expand pre-registration to 16-year-olds, provide voter registration assistance to eligible applicants in juvenile detention facilities, and streamline ballot requests for military voters. They were signed by a Democratic governor and went into effect in 2015. In 2015, a Democratic-controlled legislature passed a bill to automatically register to vote eligible individuals who interact with the DMV. It was signed by a Democratic governor and will go into effect once the state implements its statewide voter registration database, which is expected in 2017.
- **Colorado** – In 2013, a Democratic-controlled legislature modernized the voter registration process by adding Election Day registration (which has the effect of making registration portable) and allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to pre-register to vote. The law also includes a provision to mail out absentee ballots to all eligible voters. In 2014, lawmakers expanded access for voters who speak a language other than English. These measures were in effect for the first time in a major election in 2014. They were signed by a Democratic governor.
- **Delaware** – In 2013, a Democratic-controlled legislature passed a constitutional amendment expanding opportunities for people with past criminal convictions to regain their right to vote. It was in effect for the first time in a major election in 2014. It was signed by a Democratic governor.
- **District of Columbia** – In 2014, a Democratic-controlled city council created an online voter registration system. The bill was signed by a Democratic mayor in 2015 and went into effect in 2015.
- **Florida** – In 2015, a Republican-controlled legislature passed a bill creating an online registration system, which was signed by a Republican governor. The law takes effect in 2017.
- **Hawaii** – In 2014, a Democratic-controlled legislature passed a bill allowing voters to register and cast a ballot on the same day, which was signed by a Democratic governor. The law is in effect at early voting sites, and will be at polling places on Election Day in 2018.

The legislature also passed and the governor signed a bill that prohibited distribution of false information about election dates, times, and places with the purpose of interfering with the franchise.

- **Idaho** – In 2016, a Republican-controlled legislature passed a bill to launch an online voter registration system. The bill will be implemented sometime after the 2016 election. It was signed by a Republican governor.
- **Indiana** – In 2015, a Republican-controlled legislature passed a bill allowing electronic registration at agencies administering SNAP and TANF benefits. The legislation expands the current electronic registration system, which is used only at the DMV. Signed by a Republican governor, the provision went into effect in 2015.
- **Illinois** – In 2013, a Democratic-controlled legislature passed a bill creating an online registration system, which was signed by a Democratic governor. In 2014, lawmakers passed a pilot program expanding early voting and same-day registration for the November 2014 election only, which the governor signed. Both measures were in effect for the first time in 2014. Voters also approved a ballot measure to establish constitutional protections against discrimination in voting. After the election, the legislature passed, and the governor signed, a bill making same-day registration permanent, implementing electronic registration at a broad range of state agencies, and expanding early voting. Same-day registration and expansion of early voting went into effect in 2015, and electronic registration will begin in 2016.
- **Louisiana** – In 2014, a Republican-controlled legislature passed a law permitting 16- and 17-year-olds to pre-register to vote when they apply for a driver's license. The measure, which was signed by a GOP governor, went into effect in 2015.
- **Maryland** – In 2013, a Democratic-controlled legislature expanded early voting, added same-day registration during the early voting period, and commissioned a study of methods to reduce long lines at the polls. The increased early voting period was in effect for the first time in a major election in 2014. The same-day registration element took effect in 2016. The measures were signed by a Democratic governor. In 2016, a Democrat-controlled legislature overrode a veto from the state's Republican governor to automatically restore voting rights to citizens with past criminal convictions. The legislation, which originally passed in 2015, went into effect in March 2016.
- **Massachusetts** – In 2014, a Democratic-controlled legislature added early voting, online registration, and pre-registration for 16- and 17-year-olds. Online registration went into effect in 2015. Pre-registration will go into effect starting August 2016, and early voting will be in place for the November general election. The bill was signed by a Democratic governor.
- **Minnesota** – In 2014, a Democratic-controlled legislature created an online voter registration system, which was in effect in 2014. It was signed by a Democratic governor.

- **Mississippi** – In 2014, a Republican-controlled legislature expanded access to absentee ballots for deployed emergency response providers. The law was signed by a GOP governor and was in effect in 2014.
- **Montana** – In 2015, a Republican-controlled legislature passed a law expanding the scope of assistance that can be provided to voters with disabilities through their designated agents. The law was signed by a Democratic governor and went into effect in 2015.
- **Nebraska** – In 2014, state lawmakers modernized registration by requiring motor vehicle offices to electronically transfer voter information to county election offices. The bill also created an online registration system. Both elements are projected to be in effect in 2017. Nebraska’s unicameral legislature is technically nonpartisan, but it is generally controlled by Republicans. The bill was signed by a GOP governor.
- **New Mexico** – In 2013, a Democratic-controlled legislature modernized voter registration by requiring motor vehicle offices to electronically transfer voter information to county election offices. The bill was signed by a Republican governor. It was in effect for the first time in a major election in 2014. In 2015, a Democratic-controlled Senate and a Republican-controlled House passed a bill creating an online registration system, which was signed by Republican governor. The provision takes effect in 2017.
- **Oklahoma** – In 2013, a Republican-controlled legislature made Oklahoma’s existing voter ID law less restrictive. In 2014, lawmakers expanded access to absentee ballots for voters living on tribal lands. Both measures were signed by a Republican governor, and were in effect for the first time in a major election in 2014. In 2015, a Republican-controlled legislature passed a bill creating an online registration system and authorizing the secretary of state to implement electronic registration. It was signed by a Republican governor and went into effect in 2015; as of May 9, 2016, the online registration system is not yet available to the public.
- **Oregon** – In 2015, a Democratic-controlled legislature passed a bill to automatically register to vote eligible individuals who interact with the DMV. The bill was signed by a Democratic governor and started being implemented in January 2016.
- **Rhode Island** – In 2016, a Democratic-controlled legislature passed an online voter registration bill, which was signed by the governor and is expected take effect by fall 2016
- **South Carolina** – In 2014, a Republican-controlled legislature passed a law expanding absentee voting options for military voters and their families. It was signed by a Republican governor and was in effect for the first time in 2014.
- **Utah** – In 2014, a Republican-controlled legislature modernized voter registration by giving voters more time to register through certain methods, allowing registered voters without a DMV signature to update their registration information online, and established an Election Day registration pilot program. The laws were signed by a GOP governor and were in effect in 2014. In 2015, a Republican-controlled legislature passed a law to expand the Election

Day registration pilot program to include same-day registration before Election Day, and passed a bill allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to pre-register to vote. Both bills were signed by a Republican governor and went into effect in 2015.

- **Vermont** – In 2015, a Democratic-controlled legislature passed a bill allowing voters to register and cast a ballot on Election Day. Signed by a Democratic governor, the legislation takes effect in 2017. In 2016, the Democratic-controlled legislature passed an automatic voter registration bill with broad bipartisan support. It was signed by a Democratic governor and will take effect in July 2017.
- **Virginia** – In 2013, a Republican-controlled legislature created an online voter registration system. It was in effect for first time in major federal election in 2014. The bill was signed by a Republican governor. In 2015, a Republican-controlled legislature passed a bill setting minimum standards for the number of poll workers and voting machines at polling places. The bill was signed by a Democratic governor and went into effect in 2015. In 2016, a Democratic governor signed an executive order restoring voting rights to more than 200,000 citizens with past criminal convictions, upon completion of their sentence, probation, and parole. Going forward, the governor will do this on a monthly basis.
- **West Virginia** – In 2013, a Democratic-controlled legislature created an online voter registration system, which went into effect in 2014. In 2016, the Republican-controlled legislature signed an automatic voter registration bill with broad bipartisan support. Eligible citizens who obtain or renew a driver’s license will be automatically and securely registered to vote (unless they opt out). The automatic registration measure will take effect in July 2017. Both bills were signed by a Democratic governor.
- **Wisconsin** – In 2016, a Republican-controlled legislature passed a bill allowing online voter registration for anyone with a valid Wisconsin driver’s license or state-issued ID. The bill was signed by a Republican governor and will go into effect in spring 2017.
- **Wyoming** – In 2015, a Republican-controlled legislature passed a bill streamlining the process for rights restoration for individuals with past criminal convictions. It was signed by a Republican governor and went into effect in 2015.

#### **Other Notable Developments:**

- **Connecticut** – Citizens rejected a ballot measure in November 2014 that would have amended the state constitution to allow for early and no-excuse absentee voting. The bill placing that question on the ballot passed prior to 2013, and was not included in the overall count.
- **Missouri** – In 2014, a Republican-controlled legislature passed a resolution placing a ballot measure before voters to establish six days of early voting. The initiative appeared on the November 2014 ballot and was rejected by voters. While the proposal offered expanded early voting over current law, a number of advocates [opposed its passage](#) on the grounds that it provided for constitutional limits on early voting that previously did not exist.