

Issue: AZ Voter Suppression

## Talking Points: Attack on Democracy Republicans Suppress Voting and Silence Citizens

Republicans don't want you to vote—especially if you are young, a person of color, or poor. They have made it harder to vote in every way they possibly can.

### Exposing Voters to COVID-19

- Republicans are risking your life so they can stay in power. They refuse to hold an all-mail election during the pandemic. Why? Because Republicans do better when turnout is low.

### Lying About Voter Fraud

- Republicans say they are trying to prevent voter fraud, but that's false. Extensive research studies show voter fraud to be very rare. Being hit by lightning is more common than voter fraud.

### Suppressing Voter Registration

- Democrats try to make voter registration easier, more inclusive. They have proposed bills for automatic voter registration, but Republicans will not even allow a floor vote.
- Republicans try to make registration harder, more exclusive. They proposed (but failed to pass) an obstructionist bill making it a crime if registration drives didn't turn in the forms in 10 days.

### Preventing Vote by Mail

- Republicans made it a felony for anyone other than a family member to deliver your mail-in ballot. They know that African Americans, Native Americans, and low-income people, especially in rural areas, depend on others to collect and deliver their ballots.
- Last year they tried to get 200,000 voters removed from the Permanent Early Voting List so they wouldn't receive mail-in ballots.

### Closing Polling Locations

- Arizona closed 320 polling locations between 2012 and 2018—second highest in the U.S.
- There was only 1 polling place for every 21,000 voters in Maricopa County in the 2016 election. Some people waited in line for 5 hours to vote (if they didn't simply abandon the effort).

### Restricting Types of Voter ID

- Arizona requires voter ID—either a government-issued photo ID with an address, or two kinds of non-photo IDs (which are mostly related to property or vehicle ownership). Many people—particularly the poor, the young, and minorities—cannot meet those requirements.
- Nationally 11% of voters overall and 25% of African Americans do not have a government-issued photo ID.
- Students in Arizona cannot use their school IDs for voter ID purposes.
- Many Native Americans do not have acceptable voter IDs because reservations don't have residential addresses. Alternative forms of ID are often rejected by untrained poll workers.

## Purging Citizens from the Voter Rolls

- Routine purges delete a staggering number of names from the Arizona voter registration database. In Maricopa County, 1.1 million names were erased between 2008 and 2018. Election officials have no way of knowing how many eligible voters are deleted in error.
- The Motor Vehicle Department has not been notifying the Secretary of State's office when people change addresses on their driver's license. Just in the past 4 years, 390,000 Arizonans had inaccurate addresses in the voter registration database, which can result in being purged.
- Low-income and minority voters are less likely to own a home and tend to move more frequently, so their names are more likely to be purged.

## Disenfranchising Former Felons

- Arizona is among the 10 most punitive states in the U.S. in the treatment of former felons.
- More than 220,000 Arizonans cannot vote because of a past criminal record
- Arizona's policy disproportionately disenfranchises African Americans. Arizona ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in the nation for preventing African Americans from voting due to a past crime.

## Eliminating Citizen Initiatives and Referendums

- Republicans were so mad when Arizona voters passed the minimum wage initiative that they have been trying to get rid of citizen-sponsored ballot measures altogether. They have repeatedly proposed bills to amend the state constitution to weaken or eliminate citizen initiatives and referendums.
- Republicans have made the process of gathering signatures on petitions so difficult and expensive that it's practically impossible for grass-root groups to get measures on the ballot. One law allows petitions to be disqualified on minor technicalities, such as the wrong font size or paper margins.
- Republicans argued against allowing citizen groups to collect signatures online for ballot measures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Attacking the Redistricting Commission

- Republicans don't like the Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission because it means that they can't gerrymander the electoral districts.
- First they tried a lawsuit to declare the Commission unconstitutional, saying that only state legislatures could draw electoral district lines.
- When that failed, they tried to amend the state constitution so they could change the composition of the Commission and dictate the population requirements of each district.
- A new Commission will be appointed in 2021 to adopt new congressional and legislative districts based on the 2020 U.S. Census. Arizona needs Democratic state legislators because they will support the independence of the Commission to ensure fair elections for the decade to come.

## Conclusion

Republicans have sponsored bills and enacted laws that suppress voter participation in virtually every aspect of the election process. The comprehensive nature of their efforts points to a deliberate strategy to limit voters—particularly certain groups of voters—from having a voice in political decisions. Without any evidence-based justification for these laws, they serve only to suppress the right of every citizen to vote—the very essence of our democracy.