

Issue: AZ Voter Suppression

Talking Points: Recent Efforts to Suppress the Vote in Arizona

The United States is a backsliding democracy. One key reason for the degradation of our democracy is that voting rights are being curtailed. Another is partisan interference in election administration.

Since January 2021, an extraordinary number of bills have been passed to restrict voting and inject partisanship into election management in Republican-controlled states. Arizona Republicans have introduced about 10% of all such recent legislation nationwide. While most of this legislation did not pass, that could change if Republicans gain more seats in the 2022 elections.

The Myth of Election and Voter Fraud: Republican voter suppression legislation is premised on the myth of voter fraud, even though voter fraud is virtually non-existent. Claims of fraud are a dog whistle tactic used by Republicans to suppress the vote of those they believe favor Democrats.

Overturning Elections: Republicans have introduced at least three bills in Arizona that would have allowed the legislature to overturn election results. Although these bills didn't pass, they demonstrate the anti-democracy stance of many Republicans. Various provisions in these bills would have:

- Enabled the legislature to call a new election
- Required all ballots to be counted *by hand* within 24 hours of the polls closing
- Eliminated early voting and mail voting
- Allowed the legislature to override the popular vote for any reason
- Required the legislature to come into session after every election to evaluate the results, and then affirm or reject the results

Searchable Ballots: Secret ballots are a core tenet of the American electoral system. Yet two 2022 Republican-introduced bills in Arizona would have required that images of ballots be searchable online. One would have also required the names and addresses of eligible and actual voters to be published online. Although public ballot images would have been anonymized, research has shown that it is very easy to de-anonymize data. These bills did not pass.

Punishing Election Officials: Two Arizona laws that did pass contain punitive provisions that could result in election officials being charged with a felony if they (even inadvertently) fail to follow the letter of the law. For example, it is now a felony for election officials to change any dates or deadlines related to elections or send a mail ballot to someone who did not request one.

Arizonans Like No-Excuse Mail Voting: Arizonans have a clear preference for mail ballots; about 80% of voters have voted by mail in recent elections. However, recent legislation was passed that changed the Permanent Early Voting List to the Active Early Voting List (AEVL). Now voters who don't use their mail ballot frequently enough and don't respond to a notice from election officials are removed from the AEVL list.

Making Voting More Difficult and Inconvenient: Republicans have introduced bills to:

- Eliminate drop boxes
- Prohibit voting centers, which are locations in a jurisdiction where any voter can cast a ballot
- Eliminate drive-through voting
- Require that all voting occurs only on election day