

Q2 2021

SPEAK OUT AGAINST RESTRICTIVE VOTING LAWS

EMPLOYER TOOLKIT



BUSINESSFORWARD
FOUNDATION

INTRODUCTION

According to the Voting Rights Lab, as of May 2021, state legislators across 45 states have introduced more than 390 bills this session that would make it harder for Americans to vote. Some make it harder to register to vote and to find a polling place. Others make it harder for voters to request and submit early ballots. Nearly all of these laws would have disproportionately harm young and new voters, senior citizens, people of color, people with disabilities, and low-income voters.

Some Republicans are candid about what they are doing. For example, an attorney representing Arizona's Republican Party before the U.S. Supreme Court explained why the Party had sued to overturn a federal court's decision protecting voters: "Because [the law] puts us at a competitive disadvantage relative to Democrats," he argued. "Politics is a zero-sum game... It's the difference between winning an election 50 to 49 and losing an election 51 to 50."

But most Republicans argue these laws are designed to prevent "widespread voter fraud," and some groups claim as many as 1 in 20 ballots is fraudulent. In fact, one comprehensive, bipartisan investigation by secretaries of state demonstrates only about 1 in 100,000 ballots *could potentially be* fraudulent.

This toolkit is designed to help you talk with your neighbors who believe the false claims Republicans are making to justify new laws designed to make it harder for Americans to vote. We also provide advice and links to nonpartisan resources to help you and your employees register.

For those who want to do more, we can help you work with local media, advocate online, and draft a blog or op-ed. Just contact us at info@businessfwd.org.

TO STOP VOTER SUPPRESSION, YOU MUST (1) DEBUNK THE LIES REPUBLICANS TELL ABOUT VOTER FRAUD AND (2) EXPLAIN WHAT THOSE LIES COST YOUR COMMUNITY

- 1.** Republican lawmakers across the country are introducing bills that would make it harder for Americans to vote. To justify their actions, they claim “widespread voter fraud.”
- 2.** They exaggerate the problem of voter fraud by as much as 5,000 times, despite investigations across parties and states consistently failing to find evidence.
- 3.** These laws target our most vulnerable communities and increase the strain on polling places with the longest lines.
- 4.** Local business leaders can debunk false voter fraud claims. Perhaps more importantly, you can explain how critical supporting vulnerable communities is to your state’s economy and competitiveness.

RESTRICTIVE VOTER LAWS INTENTIONALLY PREVENT FAIR REPRESENTATION

The Arizona Republican Party sued to overturn a federal court’s decision protecting out-of-precinct voters from having their ballots disqualified. Attorney Michael Carvin explained why, before the U.S. Supreme Court:

“

Because [the law] puts us at a competitive disadvantage relative to Democrats... Politics is a zero-sum game, and every vote they get through unlawful interpretations of Section 2 (of the Voting Rights Act) hurts us. It’s the difference between winning an election 50 to 49 and losing an election 51 to 50.

”

- MICHAEL CARVIN
ATTORNEY FOR AZ REPUBLICAN PARTY

HOW STATES SECURE THE VOTE

PROTECTIONS AGAINST FAKE BALLOTS AND DOUBLE-VOTING

Each city or county produces its own ballots, with specific paper stock and color, security envelopes, return envelopes, and time stamps.

This makes it impossible for a foreign country to manufacture fake ballots.²

Voters who try to vote twice are wasting their time. States remove voters who've already voted by mail from the rolls on election day.

Also, ballots are numbered and barcoded, so they can't be counted twice.³

POST-ELECTION AUDITS VERIFY PROCESSES AND RESULTS

The majority of state legislatures require post-election audits, regardless of the margin of victory.

Audits verify that the equipment and procedures for counting votes during an election worked as intended, and that the process led to an accurate result.

For example, in West Virginia:

“At least 3 percent of precincts are chosen at random, and voter-verified paper ballots are counted manually to compare the manual count to the automated equipment count. If the manual count differs by more than 1 percent from the automated equipment count, or if the outcome of the election would change due to the discrepancy, then the discrepancies are immediately disclosed to the public and all voter-verified paper ballots are manually counted.”⁴

CLAIMS OF “THOUSANDS” OF DEAD VOTERS

High-profile investigations and audits in GA, MD, MI, MO, NH, NJ, and NY have disproved fraud involving deceased voters.

Each attributed the problem to flawed matches of lists from one place (death records) to another (voter rolls).

The most common causes were matching errors (the voter list had multiple “John Smiths”) or clerical errors (the clerk checked the wrong John Smith off the list).⁵

HOW REPUBLICANS ARE CREATING DELIBERATE BARRIERS TO VOTING

REPUBLICANS ARE MOVING TO RESTRICT VOTING ACCESS FOR MILLIONS OF AMERICANS

As of May 2021, state legislators across 45 states have introduced more than 390 bills that would make it harder for nearly 200 million Americans to vote. Twenty have already been enacted.⁶

Republicans use several tactics to restrict voting, including:

1. Creating shorter timelines for voter registration
2. Limiting availability of early voting and voting by mail
3. Increasing prevalence and strictness of voter ID laws
4. Purging citizens from voter rolls more frequently
5. Enforcing more stringent rules for ballot return and verification
6. Inhibiting voting rights and restoration for currently and formerly incarcerated citizens
7. Reducing the number of polling places and drop boxes
8. Curbing the authority of governors and secretaries of state to modify election administration in the case of an emergency

THEIR TACTICS HARM MARGINALIZED AMERICANS THE MOST

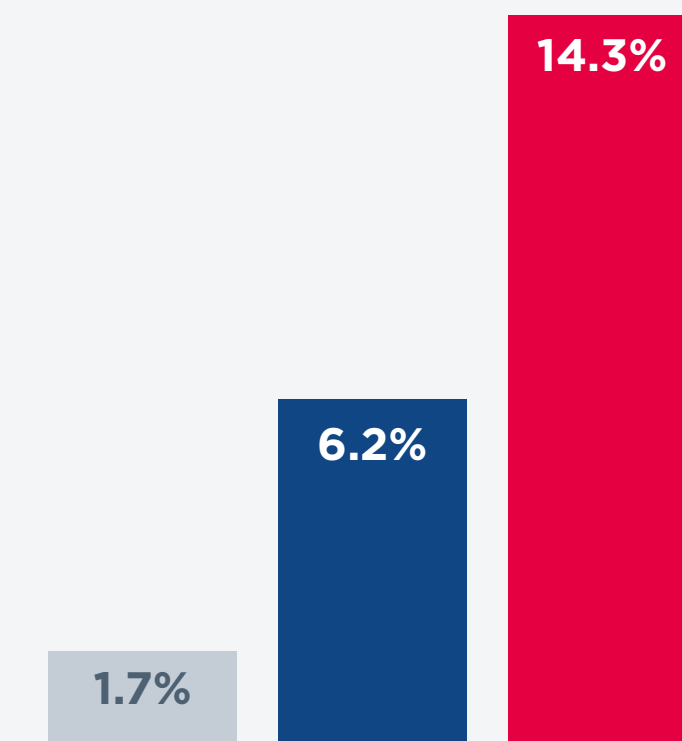
Voter ID laws target Americans who either cannot afford or obtain the documents necessary for a government-issued photo ID. These are disproportionately people of color and people with disabilities, as well as low-income and elderly voters.⁷

In some cases, laws are even more explicit: Arizona Senate Bill 1713, introduced this year, targeted Indigenous voters by moving to no longer accept tribal IDs when validating mail ballots.⁸

Counties with more people of color consistently have fewer polling sites and poll workers per voter. And due to disenfranchisement laws, one in 16 Black Americans of voting age cannot vote. The numbers are even worse in certain states.⁹

DISENFRANCHISED AMERICANS (PERCENT OF VOTING AGE POPULATION)

- NON-BLACK POPULATION
- BLACK POPULATION
- BLACK POPULATION IN 7 STATES:
AL, FL, KY, MI, TN, VA, WY

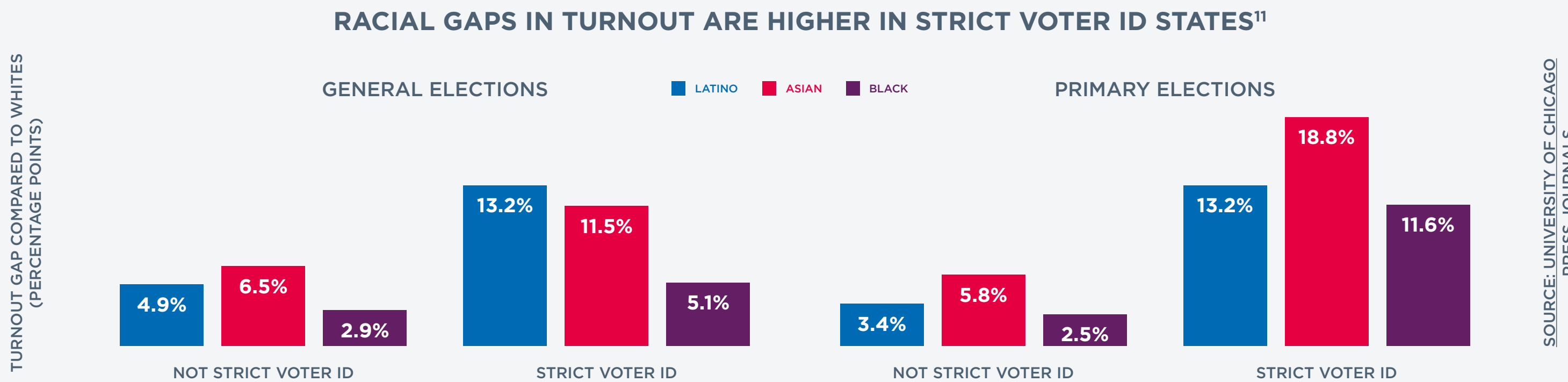


SOURCE: THE SENTENCING PROJECT

HOW RESTRICTIVE VOTING BILLS TARGET VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

VOTER ID LAWS

More than 21 million U.S. citizens do not have government-issued photo identification. Low-income Americans, less-educated voters, and people of color are more likely to lack a photo ID than wealthy, highly-educated, and white Americans. Turnout gaps can be as large as tens of thousands of voters in a single state.¹⁰



Voter ID laws are more aggressively enforced for people of color. In Texas, more than 72% of Attorney General Ken Paxton's attempted voter fraud prosecutions have been brought against Black and Latino voters, despite those groups making up just 44% of the Texas population. Nearly 9 in 10 prosecutions have occurred in counties with majority non-white and Latino populations.¹²

LONGER LINES

Voters of color are three times more likely to wait 30 minutes or more, and six times more likely to wait an hour or more to vote. In 2016, 17 states (and D.C.) had fewer polling places than in 2012, and the declines were heavily concentrated in communities of color.¹³

DISCRIMINATORY BARRIERS

Felony disenfranchisement laws target Black people due to racial bias in the criminal justice system, which dates back to Jim Crow. States with the most severe disenfranchisement laws have long histories of suppressing the rights of Black people.

Iowa, a state with permanent disenfranchisement, holds the country's most disproportionate incarceration rate of Black people.

AN ESTIMATED
1 IN 4

BLACK MEN IN IOWA CANNOT VOTE.¹⁴

70%

OF GEORGIANS PURGED FROM THE VOTER ROLLS IN 2018 WERE BLACK.¹⁵

33%

OF VOTERS WITH A DISABILITY REPORT DIFFICULTY VOTING, BECAUSE ONLY

40%

OF POLLING PLACES FULLY ACCOMMODATE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.¹⁶

INVESTIGATIONS CONFIRM “WIDESPREAD FRAUD” DOES NOT EXIST

TEXAS

The Texas attorney general’s office spent 22,000 hours looking for cases of potential voter fraud in 2021. They closed just 16 cases.

Out of more than 11,300,000 votes, that’s fewer than 1 in every 700,000 votes cast.

The attorney general’s office created an election integrity unit 15 years ago. Since it began, the unit has not uncovered a single instance of widespread fraud.¹⁷

**22,000 HOURS:
16 CASES CLOSED**

ONLY 1 IN 700,000

**VOTES CAST WERE FOUND
TO BE FRAUDULENT**

VOTE-BY-MAIL

Oregon was the first state to institute a universal vote-by-mail system. Since 2000, Oregon has sent out more than 100 million mail ballots.

The state has seen roughly 12 cases of proven fraud, or 0.00001% of all votes.¹⁸

Washington, Oregon, Hawaii, Colorado, and Utah use all-mail elections, where voting is primarily (not exclusively) conducted by mail.

The Heritage Foundation analyzed nearly 50 million votes cast since these states instituted all-mail voting and found just 44 instances of fraud.¹⁹

**+ 100 MILLION BALLOTS:
12 CASES OF FRAUD**

FEWER THAN

1

FRAUDULENT VOTE
PER

1 MILLION

VOTES CAST

OUTSIDE GROUPS EXAGGERATE VOTER FRAUD BY UP TO 5,000X

UNSUPPORTED CLAIMS VS. COMPREHENSIVE EVIDENCE

Outside groups claim up to 5% of votes cast are fraudulent.²⁰

A comprehensive investigation by U.S. election officials examined nearly 12 million ballots across five states (2016). It found only 0.001% may have been fraudulent.²¹

What's the difference between 5.000% and 0.001%?

5%

VS.

.001%

ACROSS 155 MILLION VOTES

UNFOUNDED CLAIM
(1 IN 20):

7,750,000

FRAUDULENT VOTES

ACTUAL AUDIT
(1 IN 100,000):

1,550

FRAUDULENT VOTES

VOTER FRAUD IS NOT AN ISSUE, BUT VOTER ERROR CAN BE

ANTI-VOTER GROUPS LABEL ERROR AS FRAUD

The US Election Assistance Commission found that of the 33 million ballots cast by mail in the 2016 presidential election, more than 318,000 ended up being rejected.²²

Ballots that get spit out by tabulators are often labeled as “error, double vote, overvote, etc.” which fuels the flame for calls of voter fraud. In reality, these cases are nearly always a result of voter error.

Voter errors that anti-voter groups and attorneys often label as potential fraud:

1. Voters go to the wrong polling location
2. Voters fill out their ballot incorrectly (e.g. ink color, bubbles improperly filled)
3. In certain states, like PA, voters forget to use the required inner secrecy envelope along with the outer envelope
4. Certain states require additional documentation, which voters forget to include (e.g. copies of their photo ID and witness signatures with mail ballots)

CASE STUDY: MICHIGAN

In the 2020 primary election, 6,000 Michiganders did not get their ballots to the clerk’s office by 8pm on election day.

Additionally, 31 voters forgot to put their ballot inside the envelope.²³

Instead of citing voter errors to bolster claims of fraud, election administrators should work to make the process more accessible, clear, and efficient, which would limit errors.



CEOS ARE EXPLAINING THE COST TO YOUR COMMUNITY...

MICROSOFT: “WHY WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT GEORGIA’S NEW ELECTION LAW”

Microsoft President Brad Smith spoke up when Georgia’s anti-voter bill was introduced, calling attention to the law’s restrictions on drop boxes, absentee ballots, and provisional ballots.

“ We are concerned by the law’s impact on communities of color, on every voter, and on our employees and their families. We share the views of other corporate leaders that it’s not only right but essential for the business community to stand together in opposition to the harmful provisions and other similar legislation that may be considered elsewhere...

We hope that companies will come together and make clear that a healthy business requires a healthy community. And a healthy community requires that everyone have the right to vote conveniently, safely, and securely. This new law falls short of the mark, and we should work together to press the Georgia legislature to change it. ”

- BRAD SMITH
PRESIDENT, MICROSOFT²⁴

CIVIC ALLIANCE: PROTECT VOTING ACCESS

More than 270 businesses have signed on in support of Civic Alliance’s joint statement on protecting voting access:



“We believe every American should have a voice in our democracy and that voting should be safe and accessible to all voters...

Our elections are not improved when lawmakers impose barriers that result in longer lines at the polls or that reduce access to secure ballot dropboxes. There are hundreds of bills threatening to make voting more difficult in dozens of states nationwide. We call on elected leaders in every state capitol and in Congress to work across the aisle and ensure that every eligible American has the freedom to easily cast their ballot and participate fully in our democracy.”²⁵

“BLACK EXECUTIVES PRESS COMPANIES TO BATTLE GOP STATE VOTING LAWS”

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

“TOP CEOS SPEAK OUT AGAINST GEORGIA’S VOTING RESTRICTIONS”

AXIOS

“MAJOR COMPANIES COME OUT AGAINST TEXAS BILLS LIMITING VOTER ACCESS”

©CBS

“MLB PULLS ALL-STAR GAME FROM ATLANTA OVER NEW VOTING LAW”

WBS-TV 2 ATLANTA

...AND SPEAKING OUT AGAINST RESTRICTIVE VOTING LAWS

“

We unequivocally believe in the importance of all Americans having an equal right to vote and oppose the recent Georgia voting rights law or any effort that impedes the ability to exercise this vital constitutional right.

”

VIACOMCBS

“

Our democracy is under attack by a new wave of Jim Crow bills that seek to restrict the right to vote. It is urgent that businesses across the country take a stand — and use their brands as a force for good in support of our democracy.

”

patagonia

“

Voting should be safe, accessible, and easy for everyone. SB202 undermines free and fair elections in our home state of Georgia, and will make it harder for people to exercise their right to vote, especially people of color. Georgians deserve better.

”

mailchimp

“

Our history in fact is punctuated by the moments when we expanded that right to those to whom it had been denied too long. We must continue to right the wrongs of our past, and stand united in our advocacy for equal voting rights for all.

”

BANK OF AMERICA

“

The right to vote is the essence of a democratic society, and the voice of every voter should be heard in fair elections that are conducted with integrity. Unnecessary restrictions on the right to vote strike at the heart of representative government. Business Roundtable members believe state laws must safeguard and guarantee the right to vote.

”

BR Business Roundtable

“

[The Georgia law] is wrong and needs to be remedied, and we will continue to advocate for it both in private and now even more clearly in public.

”

Coca-Cola

“

Our vote is our voice, and everyone deserves the opportunity to be heard. Governments should be working to make it easier to vote, not harder... [it] isn't a political issue, it's an issue of right and wrong.

”

CISCO

“

As a company and leadership team, we... stand against any efforts to suppress voting which is a fundamental right that belongs to all Americans.

”

AMERICAN EXPRESS

AS MORE COMPANIES ENGAGE, THE RISK OF DOING NOTHING RISES

CONSUMERS WANT THEIR BRANDS TO ENGAGE



79%
OF CONSUMERS
BELIEVE COMPANIES
SHOULD TAKE ACTION²⁶



81%
WOULD PREFER TO BUY
FROM COMPANIES THAT
SUPPORT DEMOCRACY²⁷



87%
BELIEVE COMPANIES THAT DO
TAKE ACTION HAVE THE POWER
TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE²⁸

AS MORE CEOS SPEAK OUT, BRAND RISK FALLS — AND THE RISK OF DOING NOTHING RISES²⁹

“ This campaign isn’t about any particular party or candidate or issue – it’s about encouraging more people to vote without having to make the hard choice between going to work and going to the polls. ”

- CHIP BERGH
PRESIDENT AND CEO OF LEVI STRAUSS & CO.



“ Demonstrating your company’s commitment to voting reinforces the idea that American businesses can protect our democracy. I have been heartened to see business leaders from every corner of the country and across a range of industries prioritizing the health of our democracy and I look forward to seeing this movement grow. ”

- ROSE MARCARIO
CEO OF PATAGONIA



“ The purest expression of any person’s freedom occurs in the voting booth - it is our collective moral duty as CEOs to accommodate every citizen in pursuing that privilege. ”

- TODD CARMICHAEL
CEO OF LA COLOMBE



THE GOOD NEWS: MAKING VOTING EASIER ALSO MAKES IT CHEAPER



Simplifying the voting process makes it cheaper for state election administrators, due to the avoidance of the following costs:

WASTED MAIL BALLOTS

ADDITIONAL IN-PERSON VOTING

VOTER EDUCATION

NEW APPLICATIONS

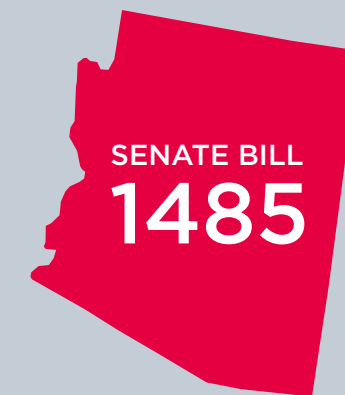
NOTIFICATION MAILERS

MAIL BALLOT PROCESSING

MAILING REGISTRATION CARDS TO VOTERS

CASE STUDY: ARIZONA

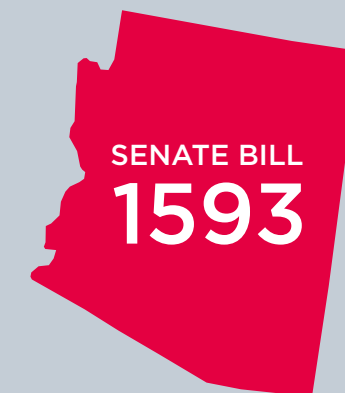
In Arizona, Republican lawmakers have introduced 27 anti-voter bills this year. Analysis by **All Voting Is Local** shows that several of the senate bills would cost Arizona county recorders millions of dollars per election cycle.



SB 1485, WHICH REMOVES VOTERS FROM THE PERMANENT EARLY VOTING LIST IF THEY FAIL TO VOTE IN BOTH THE PRIMARY AND GENERAL FOR TWO CONSECUTIVE ELECTIONS, WOULD COST MORE THAN **\$800,000** EVERY ELECTION CYCLE.

EFFECT OF BILL	STATEWIDE COSTS PER ELECTION CYCLE
NEW PEVL APPLICATIONS BY RE-ENROLLEES	\$94,978.84
NOTIFICATION MAILERS TO REMOVED VOTERS	\$373,978.50
INCREASED IN-PERSON VOTING BY REMOVED VOTERS	\$341,923.20
TOTAL	\$810,880.54

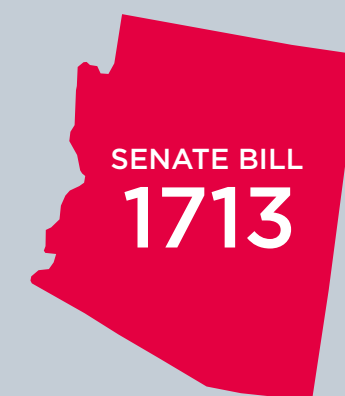
**\$810,881
PER CYCLE**



SB 1593, WHICH WOULD SHORTEN THE MAIL AND EARLY VOTING WINDOW, WOULD COST MORE THAN **\$4 MILLION** EVERY ELECTION CYCLE.

EFFECT OF BILL	STATEWIDE COSTS PER ELECTION CYCLE
COST OF WASTED MAIL BALLOTS	\$949,960.13
INCREASED IN-PERSON VOTING	\$955,934.72
VOTER EDUCATION COSTS	\$2,150,029.00
TOTAL	\$4,055,923.85

**\$4,055,924
PER CYCLE**



SB 1713, WHICH WOULD CREATE ADDITIONAL ID REQUIREMENTS FOR MAIL VOTING, WOULD COST MORE THAN **\$5.3 MILLION** EVERY ELECTION CYCLE.

EFFECT OF BILL	STATEWIDE COSTS PER ELECTION CYCLE
BIENNIAL MAILER TO ALL VOTERS	\$3,010,040.60
INCREASED MAIL BALLOT PROCESSING LABOR	\$265,537.42
VOTER EDUCATION COSTS	\$1,628,312.50
INCREASED IN-PERSON VOTING	\$477,971.20
TOTAL	\$5,381,861.72

**\$5,381,862
PER CYCLE**

WHAT YOU CAN DO AND HOW BUSINESS FORWARD CAN HELP

FOUR STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

- 1.**
HELP YOUR EMPLOYEES
REGISTER TO VOTE
- 2.**
GIVE THEM TIME TO VOTE
DURING ELECTIONS
- 3.**
SPEAK OUT ABOUT
POLICIES THAT RESTRICT
THE FREEDOM TO VOTE
- 4.**
STAND UP FOR VOTERS MOST
LIKELY TO BE SILENCED

ENGAGE WITH PARTNERS



Democracy is
GOOD FOR BUSINESS

I am a voter.[®]

**Time
To Vote**

VOTOLATINO*

HeadCOUNT.ORG

**nextgen
america** 

ELECTIONDAY.ORG

**THE NATIONAL
Coalition on Black
Civic Participation**

ROCK THE VOTE

LWV LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS[®]

VOTE.ORG

 **A Day for
Democracy**

BUSINESS FORWARD CAN HELP

Many business leaders are new to the conversation about voting rights. Business Forward is here to help.

Reach out to us at:
info@businessfwd.org



Attend one of our media trainings, where we help you make the business case for democracy by discussing key arguments, policy background, and the rules to follow when speaking up.

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INFO@BUSINESSFWD.ORG

BUSINESSFWD.ORG

1155 CONNECTICUT AVENUE NW
SUITE 1000
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036

202.861.1270

