

## Voter Registration in the United States

Voter registration policies determine how eligible citizens, 18 years or older, sign up to participate in elections. With the exception of North Dakota, all individuals are required to register prior to voting in an election. This system is designed to ensure that only qualified individuals are able to vote, while also helping maintain accurate and secure voter rolls. Some states have implemented automatic or same-day voter registration to make the process more convenient, while others require registration weeks in advance. A question to consider is whether these varying policies create unnecessary barriers to voting. In other words, should registering to vote be effortless, or should it require more deliberate action?

To register to vote, individuals typically need to provide proof of identity and residency, either online, by mail, or in person at a government office. Some states make this process more accessible through various state initiatives. Despite these accommodations, challenges such as strict ID requirements, limited registration windows, or purging of voter rolls can create obstacles for some individuals. Still, supporters argue that registration policies maintain the integrity of elections. **Your task will be to explore both the PROS and CONS of voter registration policies and present both sides in order to determine if state voting policies are justifiable.**

**Directions:** Using the links and guiding questions below, complete the graphic organizer provided with the PROS and CONS of voter registration laws in the United States.

- [Voter registration | MIT Election Lab](#)
  - This source gives a history of voter registration policies in the country and presents more recent developments regarding these policies.
    - What led to more strict voter registration policies?
    - What kind of places were these strict policies implemented in? Why?
    - Regarding registration, what kind of policies have states implemented to deter people from voting?
    - How did the VRA of 1965 attempt to remove the barriers states had built?
    - Make note of important numbers in the “How many are registered?” section.
    - Make note of each of the new developments to voter registration mentioned.
- [Arguments for and against same-day voter registration - Ballotpedia](#)

- This source presents arguments for and against same day voter registration.
  - Make note of how many states allow same day registration, and see if you can determine what their voter turnout is compared to states that do not allow it.
  - Summarize both the supporters and opponents claims regarding the impact of same day registration; voter turnout, election security, informed voting, etc.
- [Voter registration - Ballotpedia](#)
  - This source provides statistics from 2022 on the percent of the population in each state that registered to vote.
    - Make note of the percentage of the eligible population that is registered to vote in states from different regions.
    - Make note of each of the methods of registration that are presented.
- [Pros and Cons of Same Day Voter Registration](#)
  - This video presents pros and cons of same day voter registration.
    - Make note of each pro and each con.
- [PBS: Is Voting Too Hard in the US?](#)
  - This video discusses US voter turnout compared to that of other countries, and presents several barriers that may be responsible for our lower turnout.
    - Make note of what the speaker says specifically about voter registration.
- [Vote.gov](#)
  - This source shows you the voter registration laws for each state.
    - Look at your state's voter registration laws and compare them to those of a state in a different region.

**Discussion Questions:** Based on the evidence you just gathered, how do you think voter registration impacts voter participation? Should states have strict registration rules, or not?