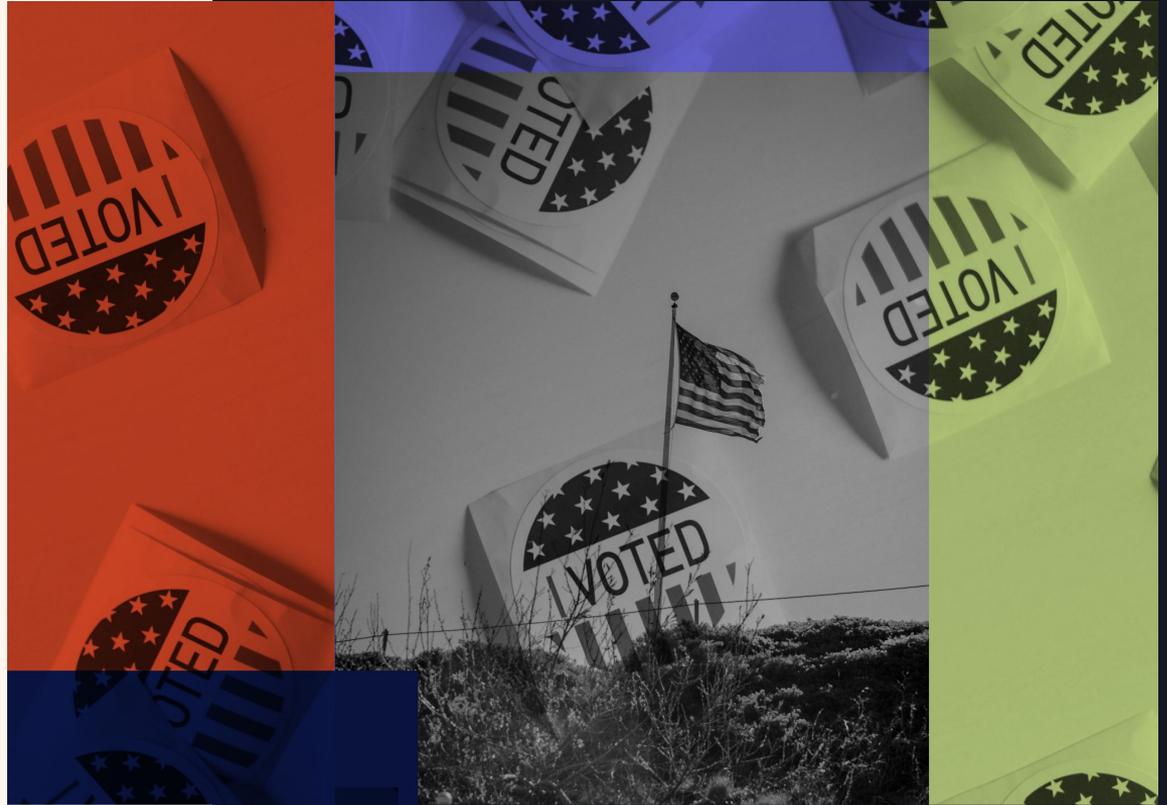


Threats to Free and Fair Elections in 2026

...and what you can do
about it!

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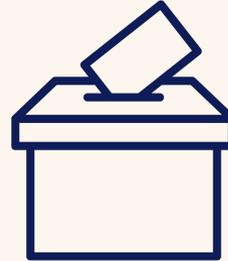
March 10, 2026

What we'll cover today

What's happening at the federal and state levels?

Why is it happening?

What can you **do about it**?



What's Happening at the Federal Level?

The federal government is trying to intervene in state election administration.

- Last March, **President Trump issued an executive order** to require proof of citizenship at registration, override state ballot receipt grace periods, etc.
- **U.S. DOJ is demanding state voter lists** with private information for investigative purposes from all 50 states. At least 12 states seem to be complying, and DOJ is suing over two dozen states for this information.
- In January, federal authorities **seized 2020 election materials in Fulton County**, Georgia.
- Lawmakers are **pushing federal legislation (incl. SAVE America Act)** that would require eligible citizens to submit difficult-to-access documentation before they can be registered to vote.



What's Going on in State Legislatures?

Some legislatures are bringing the federal government's agenda to their states.

- As of right now, 25 states have introduced bills to add new **proof-of-citizenship requirements** for voter registration.
- 25 states are considering bills to create stricter rules for **voter list maintenance and removals**.
- We've also seen bills filed in 30 states to **restrict vote by mail**.
- 14 states are considering legislation to **limit early voting**.
- Some states are advancing **mid-decade redistricting** plans, which could create confusion and election administration challenges.



Major Cases Are Pending Before the U.S. Supreme Court.

These could reshape U.S. elections.

- **Louisiana v. Callais:** Does the constitution prohibit the establishment of congressional maps that create districts based on preserving the electoral power of racial minorities (“majority-minority” districts)?
- **Turtle Mountain v. Howe:** Can private citizens initiate a suit under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act?
- **Watson v. RNC:** Do federal election-day statutes preempt state laws that allow mail ballots to be received after election day?

Why Is This Happening?

Three pillars of the President's elections agenda.

Pillar 1	Control who can register and vote.
Pillar 2	Weaken popular vote methods and create chaos and confusion.
Pillar 3	Lay the groundwork for overturning election results.

Control Who Can Register and Vote

Pillar 1

- **Redraw legislative districts** to stack the odds, dilute voting power (mid-decade redistricting; *Louisiana v. Callais*)
- **Proof-of-citizenship requirements** to register and/or vote (SAVE America Act; state legislation)
- Prohibitions or restrictions on **voter registration drives**
- **Change eligibility requirements** (e.g. for students, overseas/military voters)
- **Bad list maintenance** to purge the rolls (e.g ERIC withdrawal; inappropriate use of the federal SAVE database; unreliable data sources)
- **Threaten and intimidate opposition** with federal law enforcement



Eliminate Popular Vote Methods, and Cause Chaos and Confusion

Pillar 2

- **Cut early voting** days, hours and locations (state legislation; state and local board actions in many states)
- **Restrict mail voting** and/or eliminate universal vote by mail
- **Change ballot return deadlines** — and require all ballots to be received by Election Day (state legislation; *Watson v. RNC*)
- **Limit third-party ballot return** (called “ballot harvesting” by opponents)



Lay the Groundwork for Overturning Results

Pillar 3

- Introduce **discretion and delays to certification** (e.g. Georgia State Election Board)
- Expand the ability of partisan actors to **challenge ballots** and, in some cases, have them thrown out
- Introduce inaccuracy, delays via **hand counts** (see Texas GOP primaries; attempts in Georgia)
- Give partisan officials power to **take over election administration** (Fulton County, GA)



Proactive Opportunities to Strengthen Checks and Balances

Ensure accurate lists and prevent erroneous removals

Strengthen list maintenance procedures

Tighten rules for challenges

Implement safeguards against wrongful removal of voters

Ensure smooth ballot-casting and timely results

Limit last-minute policy changes

Limit Election Day disruption

Allow ballot pre-processing

Make reporting more transparent

Ensure results are accurate, audited and trusted

Improve auditing process

Ensure voter-verifiable systems

Implement public reporting of auditing and logic-and-accuracy results

Ensure results are certified

Strengthen accountability and clarity in certification

Tighten judicial processes and timelines for post-election challenges and protests



Leading in Your Community, Now Until Election Day

Strengthen Elections

(Spring & Summer)

Testimony, public remarks, opinion media, and work with lawmakers and county/state boards of elections. Reach decision-makers to share your perspective on the impact of election policies to ensure free and fair elections.

Build a Bigger Tent

(Summer & Fall)

Join public education efforts about how elections work to build confidence in election procedures in your state. Amplify an affirmative, patriotic message to reach a broad audience and bolster Americans' faith in their election officials. Recruit your peers to do the same.

Hold the Line

(Election Season and Post-Election)

Denounce and defeat efforts to undermine state election laws, manipulate outcomes, interfere with certification, and block millions of eligible Americans from voting.



Stay In Touch

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Secure Democracy Foundation is a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization building stronger elections, state by state. Our work is state-focused, informed by election policy insights from a national perspective, and realized by seizing common ground.

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