

Introduction 1

What is at Stake in the 2024 Election? 1

Expansion vs. Restriction: Diverging Approaches to Elections Since 2020 2

 Expansive Trends..... 2

 Restrictive Trends 6

Key Impacts: More Restrictions than Expansions, With Disproportionate Impact Across States, Populations, and Regions..... 10

 More States Have Moved in a Restrictive Direction Since 2020 10

 States Enacted More Restrictive Policies vs. Expansive Policies Overall Since 2020..... 10

 Almost Half of All Eligible Voters Live in States That Have Become More Restrictive Since 2020..... 10

 Black Voters Disproportionately Impacted by Restrictive Trends... 12

 Regional Divides Have Also Deepened Since 2020..... 12

Conclusion 14

Endnotes 15

This report was authored by:

Movement Advancement Project

MAP’s mission is to provide independent and rigorous research, insight, and communications that help speed equality and opportunity for LGBT and all people. MAP works to ensure that all people have a fair chance to pursue health and happiness, earn a living, take care of the ones they love, be safe in their communities, and participate in civic life.

Contact Information

Movement Advancement Project

1905 15th Street #1097
 Boulder, CO 80306
 1-844-MAP-8800

www.mapresearch.org

Recommended citation: Movement Advancement Project. June 2024. *Democracy Diverging: The Battle Over Key State Election Laws Since 2020*. www.mapresearch.org/2024-election-trends-report

MAP is very grateful to the following major funders, whose generous support makes it possible for us to do our work:

David Bohnett Foundation
 David Dechman & Michel Mercure
 Gill Foundation
 H. van Ameringen Foundation
 Ineke Mushovic
 Johnson Family Foundation
 MacKenzie Scott

Ronald W. Naito MD Foundation
 The Palette Fund
 Tzedek Social Justice Fund
 Weston Milliken
 Wild Geese Foundation
 Zillow

Acknowledgements:

Democracy Forward
 Giffords Law Center
 More Equitable Democracy

Introduction

The 2020 election, held amid a pandemic, saw a dramatic upheaval in the way Americans vote and how our elections are run. The aftermath of the election also saw the rise of the election denialism movement, the pernicious effects of which are still being felt today. Since 2020, the debate over election and voting laws has grown and intensified, both in terms of policies once considered noncontroversial as well as in newly emerging trends in the states.

This report surveys policy trends over the last four years that have impacted not only how voters cast their ballots, but also the security and independence of our elections. While some states have put an emphasis on voter access and expanding opportunities for eligible citizens to become registered to vote, other states have prioritized restrictive measures that roll back temporary policies enacted during the pandemic and go even further to implement new regressive laws. In addition, state legislatures have articulated—and acted upon—opposite visions for election security, with some states focused on protecting election officials and election results from interference, while other states implement measures to combat the specter of supposed voter fraud.

Using the Movement Advancement Project's (MAP) Democracy Maps and bill tracking, this report shows the progression of these opposing trends in recent years and forecasts what impacts these changes are likely to have on the upcoming 2024 elections—and for American democracy overall.

What is at Stake in the 2024 Election?

As we approach the 2024 election, the implications of trends in election and voting policy that have emerged since 2020 loom large. The contrasting trajectories of the expansion of voter access in some states and restrictive measures in others are poised to have—or in some cases are already having—a significant impact on election outcomes, voter turnout, and public confidence in the electoral process.¹ The persistence of the election denialism movement also stands to exacerbate already widening partisan divides and further undermine the health of our democracy.²

The trends explored in this report are also set to have a critical impact on voters across the country. The rapid changes that have taken place since the 2020 election have the potential to sow confusion among voters and lead to potential disenfranchisement, particularly for marginalized groups who already face ingrained barriers to the ballot box. With requirements for voting differing dramatically between states, an individual voter's opportunity to participate in and shape the future of our democracy may increasingly depend solely on where they live.

More broadly, the widening gap in terms of voting and election policy between states also raises the risk of our electoral systems losing legitimacy. Laws implemented by states to combat the supposed specter of voter fraud often in reality lay the groundwork for actual election subversion by partisans acting in bad faith. New policies that allow legislatures to interfere in election administration and the continuing restriction of voting rights also weaken the health of our democracy.

Importantly, these evolving trends also include positive developments that expand voter access and implement measures to actually improve election security and independence. As discussed below, multiple states have passed pro-voter and pro-democracy policies since 2020, including new protections for election officials, the expansion of automatic voter registration, and bans on firearm possession in polling places.

The trends discussed in this report illustrate the opposite directions that states are moving in terms of access to voting and the security and independence of our elections, as well as the resulting impacts on the health of our democracy as a whole.

Expansion vs. Restriction: Diverging Approaches to Elections Since 2020

This report focuses on rapid shifts in eight key state election laws and policies since the 2020 election, including some policies or types of law that have newly emerged in that time. Below, we show each of these eight policies and how states have grown more expansive or restrictive in their approach to each.

Broadly speaking, we refer to expansive changes or policies as those that expand voter access, reduce barriers to the ballot, and make elections more secure and independent. Examples include automatic voter registration, state level voting rights acts, and protections for election officials against threats and intimidation. Conversely, we categorize changes or policies as restrictive if they put unnecessary restrictions on the voting process, lead to disenfranchisement, and make elections more partisan, such as strict voter ID laws or allowing state legislatures to interfere in elections.

The analysis below draws on MAP’s Democracy Maps, tracking over 50 voting- and election-related laws and policies currently on the books in each state.^a MAP tracks these policies across all 50 states and the District of Columbia (D.C.) and updates and maintains these resources in real-time. This report focuses specifically on eight key policies that have seen significant change over the last four years and/or have newly emerged in that time frame. See MAP’s Democracy Maps for more information on the many other laws and policies shaping election law across the country.

Overall, this report shows the increasing divergence over the last four years between states in defining what constitutes a secure and strong democracy for all Americans.

Expansive Trends

The trends highlighted in this section are a combination of election and voting policies that have newly emerged since the 2020 election and existing policies that have seen significant change across the states in that time. These expansive policies focus on providing equal access to the ballot for all eligible voters as well as combatting the increased climate of violence and division around our elections that has intensified since 2020.

Overall, and as discussed in more detail in the “Impacts of Key Policy Trends” section, since 2020, 22 states and the District of Columbia (D.C.) have enacted at least one of the four expansive laws discussed in this report. This includes 17 states and D.C. that have enacted only expansive laws since 2020; five states have enacted both at least one expansive law and at least one restrictive law.^b



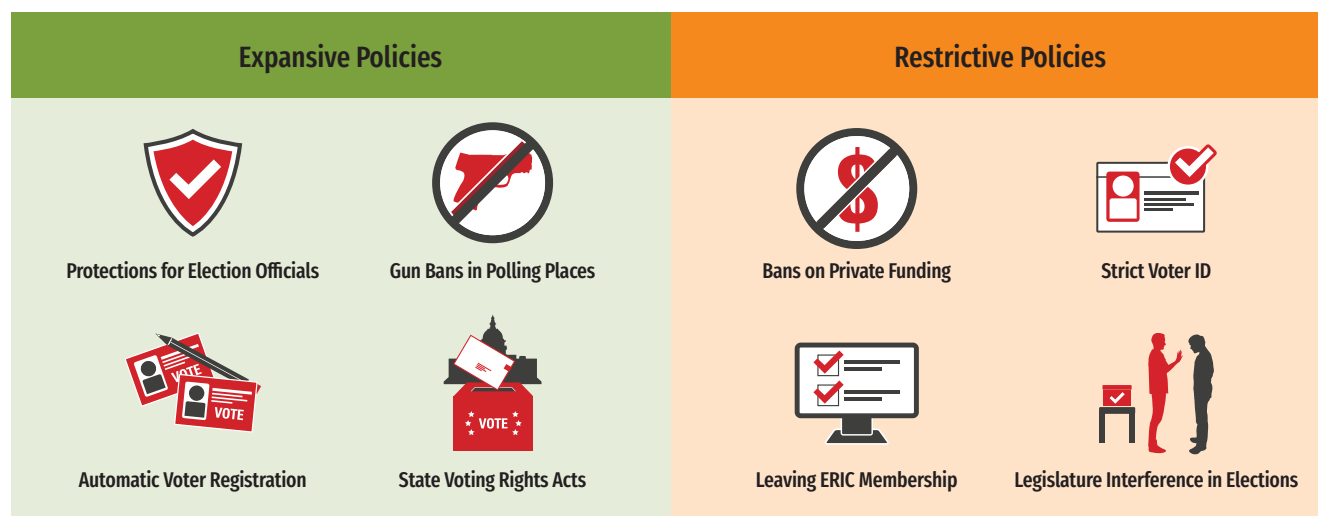
Protecting Election Workers from Threats & Intimidation

Since the 2020 election cycle, state and local election officials have been the targets of an alarming increase in violent threats and harassment.³ Much of this rise can be linked to the proliferation of unfounded claims of voter fraud and rigged elections. As a result, and as shown in **Figure 1** on the following page, **16 states and D.C. have put in place new laws that seek to**

^a See www.mapresearch.org/democracy-maps.

^b This refers only to the eight policies discussed in this report; states may have enacted other restrictive or expansive laws not covered in this report.

MAJOR ELECTION POLICY TRENDS SINCE 2020



explicitly protect the election officials who protect our democracy, covering 33% of eligible voters. All of these have been enacted since 2020.

These additional protections may include increased criminal penalties for threatening or harassing officials, interfering with officials in the performance of their duties, or allowing officials to have their personal information exempted from public records. It should be noted that generally applicable state laws, such as those against harassment in general, may already be in place that can be used to protect election officials and prosecute perpetrators of threats or intimidation. However, these newly enacted laws that have all passed since 2020 demonstrate a clear focus by policymakers, even spanning partisan divides, that more should be done to protect the people who allow our democracy to function.

This represents one of the fastest growing trends across all areas of voting and election administration policy. Notably, this has also been a rare bipartisan trend, with five Republican or split party-controlled states passing these laws: Indiana, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Wisconsin and Virginia.⁴

While the chaos of the 2020 election initially provided the impetus for states to adopt these laws, protecting election officials has arguably become even more important heading into the 2024 election. The ongoing vitriol and violence directed at these officials has led to an unprecedented exodus of experienced election officials: according to research recently conducted by the Bipartisan Policy Center, the turnover rate

for election officials in 2022 was the highest in 20 years, at almost 40%.⁵ The research also found that turnover was the highest in battleground states like Arizona and North Carolina. As we head into what is likely to be another highly contentious election, this exodus leaves a vacuum that could be filled by inexperienced administrators, or worse, partisans acting in bad faith to unduly influence the outcomes of the election. Implementing protections for these officials at the heart of the democratic process can work to stem the tide of election denialism and the erosion of our democratic principles.



Bans on Guns in Polling Places

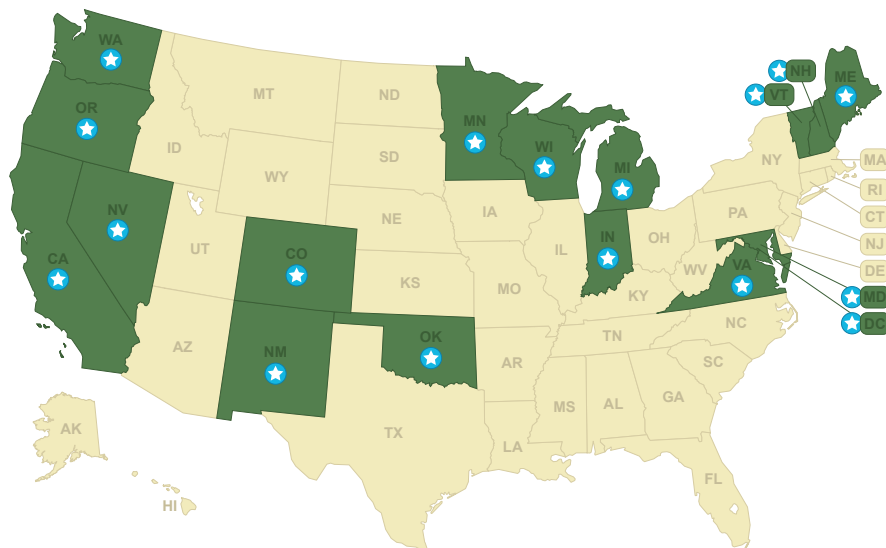
According to the Small Arms Survey, there are approximately 120 guns for every 100 people in the United States.⁶ Guns at polling places, even if not used to commit violence, can be used to intimidate voters and election officials, as evidenced by our country's long and fraught history of political violence, often targeted at Black voters and other historically disenfranchised groups.⁷ Combined with the marked rise in threats to election officials and violent rhetoric around elections,⁸ the proliferation of firearms in our country represents an increasing danger for everyone participating in the voting process.

There is currently no federal law prohibiting the possession of firearms in polling places, and therefore these policy decisions are left to the states. In addition, the U.S. Supreme Court's

FIGURE 1: RAPID GROWTH SINCE 2020 IN STATES WITH LAWS EXPLICITLY PROTECTING ELECTION OFFICIALS FROM THREATS AND VIOLENCE

- State has a law protecting election officials against threats (16 states + D.C.)
- State has not passed a law explicitly protecting election officials against threats (34 states)
- State has changed since 2020 (16 states + D.C.)

Source: MAP: [Democracy Maps](#). Data as of June 15, 2024.



2022 *Bruen* decision significantly weakened the ability to regulate the concealed carry of firearms, forcing at least some states to further reconsider their laws in this area.⁹

As shown in **Figure 2, since 2020, 11 states have enacted full (7 states) or partial (4) bans on the possession of guns in polling places**, joining 12 other states and D.C. that already had such bans in place. As a result, a total of 23 states and D.C. now have total (17) or partial (7) bans on the possession of guns in polling places, covering 64% of eligible voters.^c

Partial bans on guns in polling places often have exceptions for concealed carry permit holders but ban the open carry of firearms in polling places. Legislative activity on this issue has also continued through 2024, with at least 25 bills being introduced across the country to limit the possession of firearms in polling places.¹⁰

Like protections for election officials, laws banning guns from polling places represent a crucial bulwark against the rise of intimidation and violence that has inundated our political process since 2020. To maintain secure and peaceful elections, both election officials and voters should be safe from the threat of gun violence when participating in our democracy.

^c It should be noted that additional prohibitions may apply in states that regulate the possession of firearms in other sensitive locations, such as schools, which may also be used as polling places.



Automatic Voter Registration

Automatic voter registration (AVR) is a policy that modernizes the voter registration process by automatically registering eligible voters through their interactions with state agencies, most commonly when people apply for or renew their driver's licenses. Automatic voter registration helps to make sure that every eligible voter has access to the vote, as well as strengthening the security and accuracy of our election systems.¹¹

Broadly speaking, there are two key types of AVR: Secure AVR and Partial AVR. In Secure AVR systems—sometimes referred to as “back-end AVR”—designated agencies such as state DMVs systematically send information from relevant transactions (such as driver's license applications) to state election authorities. Once the voter's eligibility is confirmed, the voter is then automatically registered (or registered in pending status) before being given an opportunity to opt-out at a later time, usually through the mail. Secure AVR systems are more efficient and effective at registering eligible voters, keeping registration records accurate, and registering only U.S. citizens to vote.¹² In Partial AVR systems—sometimes called “front-end AVR”—the voter is given an opportunity to opt-out of being registered at the time of the relevant agency transaction. Partial AVR is an improvement over traditional registration systems but is relatively less efficient than Secure AVR.¹³

FIGURE 2: STATE LAWS BANNING FIREARMS FROM POLLING PLACES HAVE INCREASED SINCE SUPREME COURT DECISION WEAKENING PREVIOUS REGULATIONS

- State has a total prohibition against guns in polling places (16 states + D.C.)
- State has a partial prohibition against guns in polling places (7 states)
- State has no clear prohibition against guns in polling places (27 states)
- ★ State has changed since 2020 (11 states)

Source: MAP. [Democracy Maps](#). Data as of June 15, 2024.

Laws Banning Firearms from Polling Places

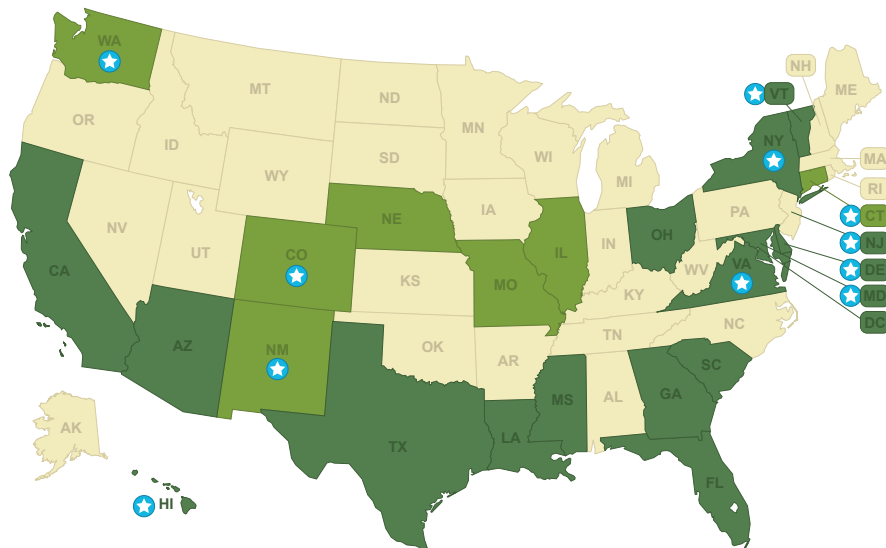
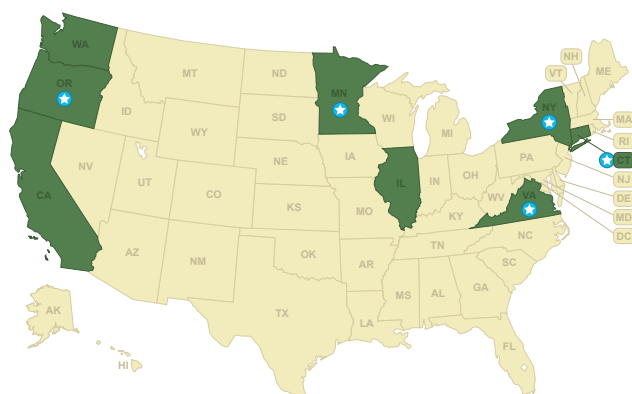


FIGURE 4: LACK OF FEDERAL PROTECTIONS HAS MOTIVATED STATES TO ADOPT THEIR OWN VOTING RIGHTS ACTS



- State has enacted a state level voting rights act (8 states)
- State has no applicable law (42 states + D.C.)
- ★ State has changed since 2020 (5 states)

Source: MAP. [Democracy Maps](#). Data as of June 15, 2024.

States with Voting Rights Acts

are critical measures to fill the gap. State voting rights acts ensure that essential protections are in place to combat racial discrimination, gerrymandering and voter suppression.

Restrictive Trends

Like the expansive trends discussed in the previous section, the restrictive policies spotlighted here are a combination of election and voting policies that have newly emerged since the 2020 election and existing policies that have seen the most change in that time. These restrictive trends showcase efforts by conservative states to implement policies supposedly intended to combat voting and election fraud, but which, in reality, work to restrict access for otherwise eligible voters and harm the independence and integrity of our election systems.

Overall, and as discussed in more detail in the “Impacts of Key Policy Trends” section, since 2020, 29 states have enacted at least one of the four restrictive laws discussed in this report. This includes 24 states that have enacted only restrictive laws since 2020; five states have enacted both at least one restrictive law and at least one expansive law.^d



Bans on Private Funding of Election Offices

During the 2020 election cycle, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, philanthropists recognized a need for additional funding for election offices. These grants were available to any election jurisdiction, and over 2,500 individual offices received additional funding to increase their staffing, training, and available equipment and to conduct safe elections despite COVID-19.¹⁹ All funds were required to be used exclusively for the public purpose of planning and ensuring safe and secure election administration. **Since 2020, however, 26 states have enacted bans on the private funding of election administration offices, while disregarding the gaps in public funding that led to the need for these private grants in the first place.** This is shown in **Figure 5** on the following page, and these 26 states affect 55% of all eligible voters.²⁰

All states with such a ban have enacted these bans since 2020. This trend includes new bans in both Louisiana and Wisconsin adopted directly by voters in constitutional amendments at the ballot box in 2023 and 2024 respectively. As a result, and as shown in Figure 5, a majority of states (26) now have these bans in place, affecting 55% of all eligible voters.

While there are reasonable arguments that elections are a public function and therefore should be funded by the government, the reality is that state and local election offices still rely on inconsistent and limited federal funding for election administration offices. These funding gaps are likely to persist through the 2024 election and beyond, especially in states that have closed off avenues for philanthropic support. These gaps lead to outdated equipment and processes, which can in turn result in longer wait times to vote and disruptions in the polling place. Interruptions in the voting process, while not caused by any malfeasance, often then in turn lead to related misinformation proliferated on social media. Deficits in funding are also likely to impact already disenfranchised voters, like low-income voters or those with disabilities. In addition, the bans now in place in a majority of states also do not account for the possibility of emergencies in the future, such as a natural disaster, which may renew the need for this type of funding to support our democratic process.

^d This refers only to the eight policies discussed in this report; states may have enacted other restrictive or expansive laws not covered in this report.



Strict Voter ID Requirements

While some argue that voter ID requirements are important for election security, these laws are an extremely recent development in American history: prior to the 2006 election, no state ever required a voter to produce a government-issued photo ID as a condition to voting.²¹ In 2006, Indiana became the first state to enact a strict photo ID requirement,²² with more and more states considering new or tighter restrictions each year—and particularly so following the 2020 election.

Currently, and as shown in **Figure 6**, 15 states require a form of ID to vote, with 11 of those states specifically requiring a photo ID. This means that nearly one in four people (24%) who are eligible to vote live in a state with ID requirements, and most of them (20%) live in states with particularly strict photo ID requirements.²³ These identification requirements or procedures in place create barriers for eligible voters who may not be able to obtain a specific form of required ID. Overly strict voter ID laws usually require very limited forms of ID and/or burdensome additional steps to be taken by the voter after Election Day to ensure their vote is counted.

FIGURE 5: MAJORITY OF STATES HAVE BANNED PRIVATE FUNDING OF ELECTION OFFICES SINCE 2020

- State bans private grant funding for election administration (26 states)
- State does not ban private grant funding for election administration (24 states + D.C.)
- State has changed since 2020 (26 states)

Source: MAP, [Democracy Maps](#). Data as of June 15, 2024.

States with Private Funding Bans

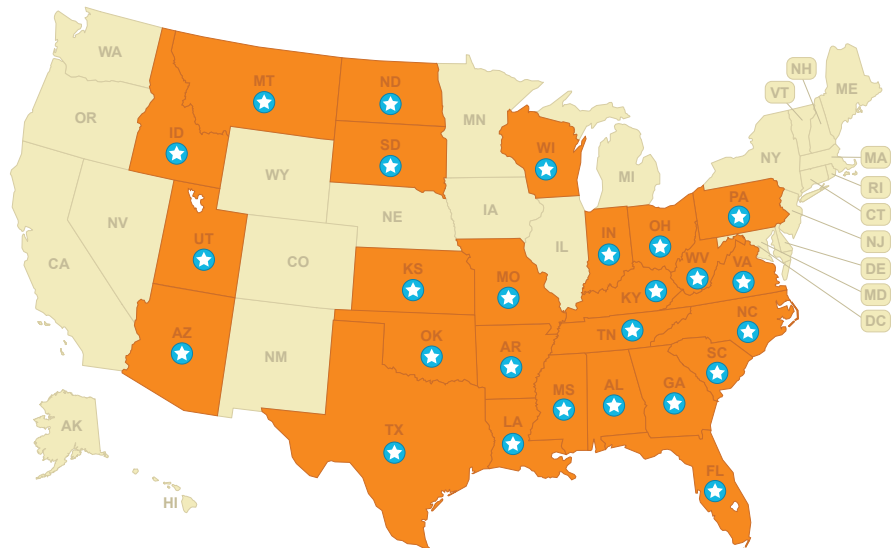
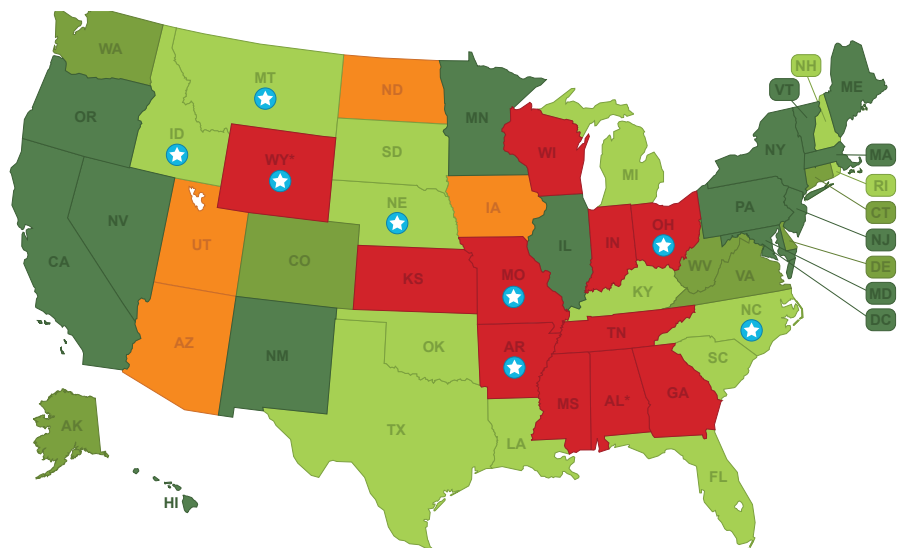


FIGURE 6: 20% OF VOTERS LIVE IN STATES WITH STRICT VOTER IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- No ID required, but voter eligibility is verified through other means (14 states + D.C.)
- Non-strict, non-photo ID law (7 states)
- Non-strict, photo ID law (14 states)
- Strict, non-photo ID law (4 states)
- Strict, photo ID law (11 states)
- State has changed since 2020 (8 states)

Source: MAP, [Democracy Maps](#). Data as of June 15, 2024.

State Level Voter ID Map



* These states have narrow exceptions that may allow some voters to cast a ballot without photo ID, but MAP categorizes these states as having strict photo ID laws because these exceptions may not be available to all voters. See our website for more details.

Since 2020, at least eight states have made substantial changes to their voter ID laws; all eight states implemented changes which made their ID laws more restrictive. As a result, 11 states now have strict photo ID laws in place, in addition to four states with strict non-photo ID laws. These 15 states alone represent almost 25% of all eligible voters.²⁴

Voters in the states that have implemented these restrictive ID laws since 2020 will face additional barriers to the ballot box this November. Studies show that these restrictive laws reduce turnout across the general population by as much as three percentage points²⁵—and in the 2020 election, seven states were decided by less than three percentage points.²⁶ While these unnecessary hurdles make it harder for everyone to vote, research shows that voters of color are disproportionately impacted by these requirements,²⁷ and further that they are more likely to be asked for ID at the polling place, even in places with no ID requirements at all.²⁸ As a result, these new restrictive requirements could have a significant impact on the 2024 contest and who gets to have their voice heard in November.

Studies show that restrictive voter ID laws can reduce turnout across the general population by as much as three percentage points—or almost 1.5 million voters across the 11 states with strict voter ID laws.

Source: Government Accountability Office, September 2014.



Declining Membership in the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC)

The Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) is a non-profit organization created in 2012 to assist states in improving the accuracy of their voter rolls. ERIC helps states modernize their voter registration systems and increase efficiency and security. Member states submit their data to ERIC, which then allows the states to see if voters have moved within or out of state, identify duplicate registrations, and remove ineligible voters.

In a concerning trend that began in late 2022, states began to withdraw from membership in ERIC, even though it is recognized by experts as the best tool available to maintain accurate voter lists and prevent any rare voter fraud that might occur.²⁹ The exodus of states from ERIC, like the other restrictive trends discussed in this report, is largely fueled by states bowing to political pressure and misinformation. **Since the 2020 election, nine states have withdrawn from ERIC, and none have joined.** In addition, legislation passed this year in Kentucky will likely lead to the state's withdrawal in 2025. Virginia's governor also vetoed legislation that would have required the state to rejoin ERIC following its withdrawal in 2023. As shown in **Figure 7**, the majority of states no longer participate, leading to 60% of all eligible voters now living in states without access to the more modernized, efficient, and secure registration systems supported by ERIC.³⁰

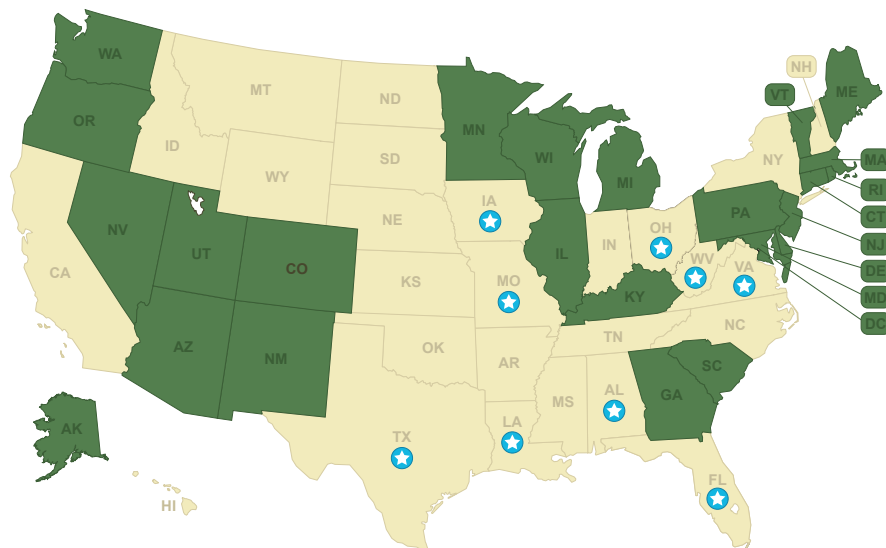
While the mass withdrawal from ERIC may seem like an insider issue that has few impacts on voters, that is not the case. First, ERIC as an organization is more effective and efficient when

FIGURE 7: DECLINING MEMBERSHIP IN ERIC

- State is a member of ERIC (24 states + D.C.)
- State is not a member of ERIC (26 states)
- ★ State has changed since 2020 (9 states)

Source: MAP, Democracy Maps. Data as of June 15, 2024.

States with Membership in ERIC



more states are members and share data with one another, as this broader participation creates a more comprehensive dataset with fewer gaps. Second, the vacuum left in the states that have withdrawn is being filled by unreliable alternatives such as Eagle AI, a tool promulgated by conservative activists that relies on amateur investigators and public data scrapers.³¹ Third, the absence of reliable data from ERIC could lead to problems for voters at polling places if their information is not up to date on the voter rolls; those voters may then be forced to cast provisional ballots and potentially not have their votes counted. Once a noncontroversial subject, the weakening of ERIC is yet another cascading effect of the election denialism movement that has invaded and pervaded our democracy.



State Legislature Interference in Election Administration

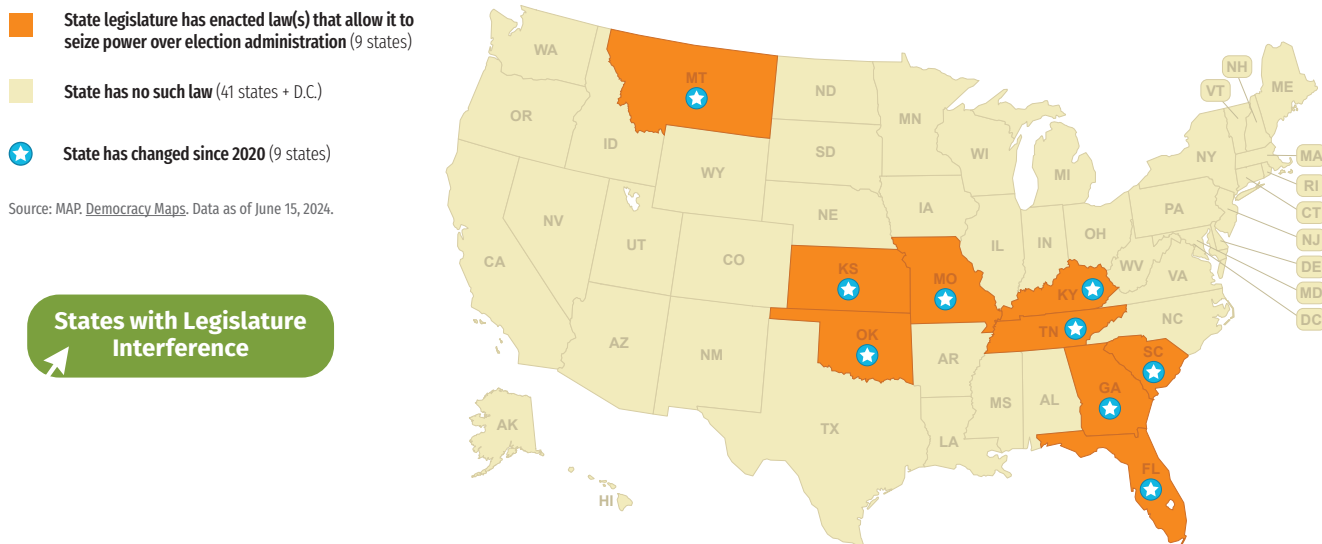
Following the 2020 election, partisan actors in many states sought to undermine the will of the voters and pursue a strategy to overturn election results. In the four years since, multiple state legislatures enacted laws that increase the danger of election subversion by giving themselves more power to interfere in election administration. These new laws

vary in their approaches. Some give the state legislature more power to intervene or override election related litigation, some remove the authority over election from state authorities and vest it with the legislature, and some allow legislatures to interfere with local election administrators.

Since 2020, nine states have enacted laws allowing legislatures to interfere in election administration, with some states enacting multiple different provisions. All states with these laws have enacted them since 2020 and the false claims of a stolen presidential election. As shown in **Figure 8**, almost 20% of voters now live in states with these types of laws that may critically undermine the integrity of their elections.³²

As we approach the 2024 election, state legislatures with the power to interfere in election administration risks exposing our democracy to partisan disruption and manipulation. These laws operate to allow the undermining of the popular will of the voters and the core principles of our democracy. By removing the longstanding functions of nonpartisan election administration and putting power in the hands of partisan actors potentially acting in bad faith, these laws power the election denialism movement and set up a potential constitutional crisis in 2024.

FIGURE 8: STATE LEGISLATURES HAVE GIVEN THEMSELVES MORE POWER TO INTERFERE IN ELECTIONS SINCE 2020



Minnesota and Missouri Illustrate States' Diverging Visions for Democracy

Two states in particular illustrate the broader trends of divergence and polarization in state election and voting policies since 2020.



On the positive side, Minnesota has adopted three of the four expansive policies spotlighted in this report since 2020: protections for election workers, secure AVR and a state level voting rights act. Additionally, Minnesota has also enacted other expansive election laws in recent years not covered in this report, such as the restoration of rights for formerly incarcerated voters and a permanent mail voting list.



On the other hand, Missouri illustrates the state that has taken the most negative actions in terms of the policies covered in this report, adopting all four of the restrictive policies spotlighted above. Missouri has also adopted additional restrictive policies since 2020, such as a ban on ballot drop boxes and limits on the allowable excuses to vote by absentee ballot.

These shifts are also indicative of larger trends in these two states. Minnesota is currently rated as one of the top ten states in MAP's Democracy Tally, covering over 50 election-related laws and policies, while Missouri occupies one of the bottom five slots. This gap, and the diverging pathways more broadly, also extend to other policy areas; Minnesota is currently in the top half of states in MAP's Equality Tally, which tracks over 50 policies impacting LGBTQ people, and has seen significant improvements in recent years, while Missouri ranks in the bottom half and has seen significant declines in the same time frame. This illustrates that states are not only diverging in their visions of democracy, but of society and public life more broadly.

Key Impacts: More Restrictions than Expansions, With Disproportionate Impact Across States, Populations, and Regions

More States Have Moved in a Restrictive Direction Since 2020

Using MAP's original research on the eight policies discussed in this report, a clear trend across the states emerges. Since 2020, as shown in **Figure 9** on the following page, 24 states have become more restrictive in terms of the policies tracked in this report, while only 17 states & D.C. have become more expansive. An additional five states adopted both expansive and restrictive policies since 2020, while four states saw no change.

This movement shows that almost half of all states became more restrictive since 2020, and that more than half (29 states, including those that passed a mix of laws) enacted at least some restrictions. This illustrates the widening gap and diverging visions between states in what is considered a healthy democracy.

States Enacted More Restrictive Policies vs. Expansive Policies Overall Since 2020

In addition to the trend of states becoming more restrictive overall since 2020, MAP's analysis also reveals that nationwide, more restrictive policies were passed in total versus expansive policies, as shown in **Figure 10** on the following page.

Of the policies covered in this report, 52 restrictive laws were enacted across the country since 2020, as opposed to 40 expansive laws. The policy area that saw the most movement was also restrictive, with 26 states enacting bans on private funding of election offices, far exceeding the 16 states & D.C. that enacted new laws explicitly protecting election workers from threats and violence.

Almost Half of All Eligible Voters Live in States That Have Become More Restrictive Since 2020

As shown in **Figure 11** on page 12, the 24 states that have enacted only restrictive laws since 2020—out of the eight policies addressed in this report—represent more than 45% of all eligible voters in the country, or nearly 110,000,000 eligible voters. Including the five states that have passed a mix of both

FIGURE 9: SINCE 2020, MORE THAN HALF OF STATES HAVE ENACTED RESTRICTIVE VOTING LAWS, AND NEARLY HALF HAVE ENACTED ONLY RESTRICTIVE LAWS

Of the 8 policies in this report, since 2020:

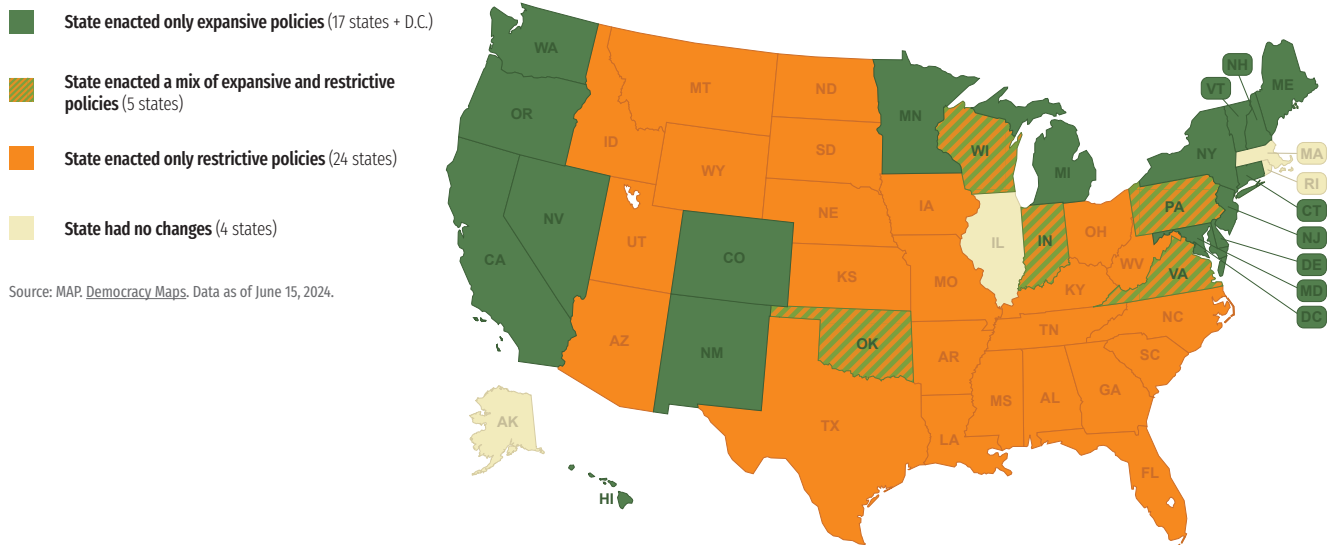
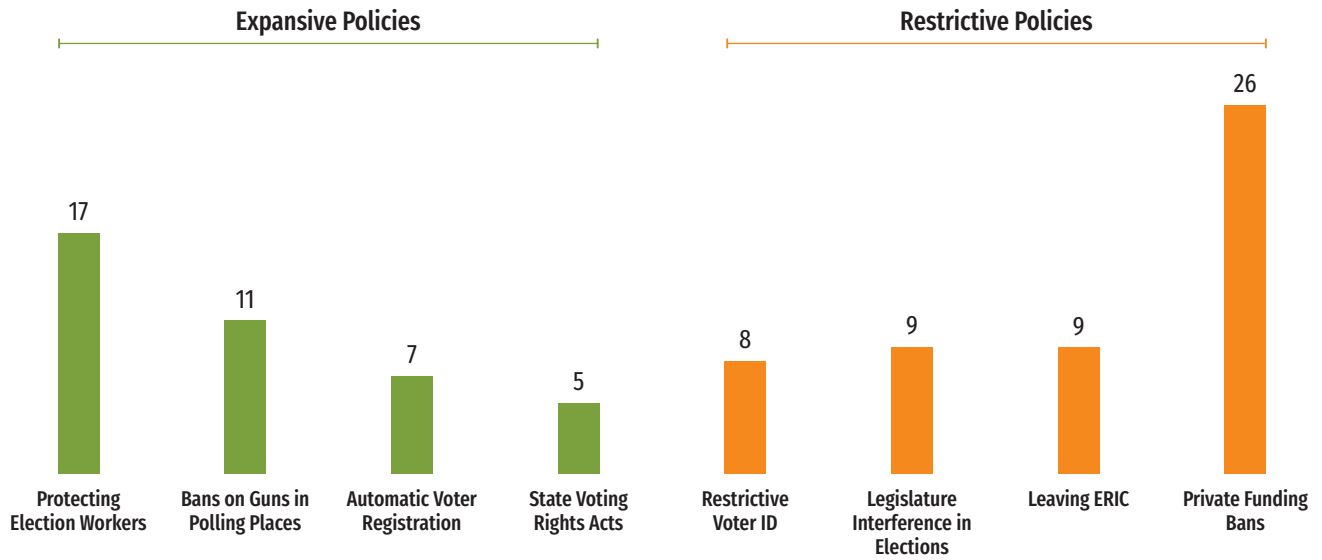


FIGURE 10: SINCE 2020, MORE RESTRICTIVE LAWS THAN EXPANSIVE LAWS HAVE BEEN ENACTED

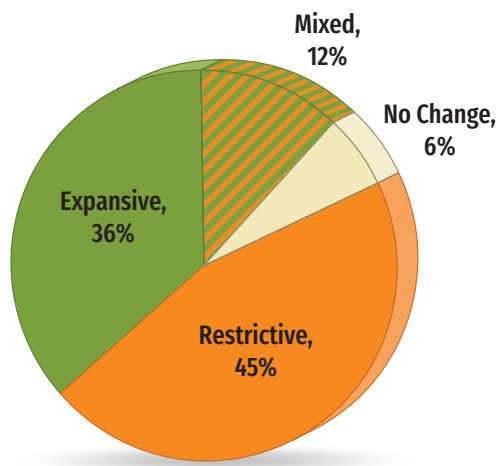
of states that have adopted each type of policy since 2020



Source: MAP original analysis.

FIGURE 11: ALMOST HALF OF ALL ELIGIBLE VOTERS LIVE IN STATES THAT HAVE BECOME MORE RESTRICTIVE SINCE 2020

% of eligible voters living in each type of state



Population data source: [University of Florida Election Lab](#)

restrictive and expansive laws, those 29 states that have enacted at least one restrictive law since 2020 represent 57% of all eligible voters—or nearly 138,000,000 voters in the country.

Conversely, only 36% of eligible voters live in states that have enacted only expansive laws covered in this report since 2020. Even with the voters in the five states that passed a mix of expansive and restrictive changes, still less than half of eligible voters (48%) live in states that saw new expansive laws.

Overall, almost all voters living in states that have seen at least some change in election and voting policy since 2020, with only 6% of voters live in states that saw no changes. As shown here, the majority of voters live in states that enacted at least one restrictive law since 2020.

Black Voters Disproportionately Impacted by Restrictive Trends

While these restrictive policies are harmful to all voters, as discussed in each respective section above, these restrictive trends are disproportionately affecting Black voters across the country.

While 45% of all eligible voters live in states that have passed only restrictive laws since 2020 (Figure 11), **Figure 12** on the following page shows that 54% of Black adults live in those same states.^e Including those living in states that passed any restrictive law, even if those states also passed an expansive law, this rises to 65% of Black adults (Figure 12), compared to 57% of all eligible voters (Figure 11).

Regional Divides Have Also Deepened Since 2020

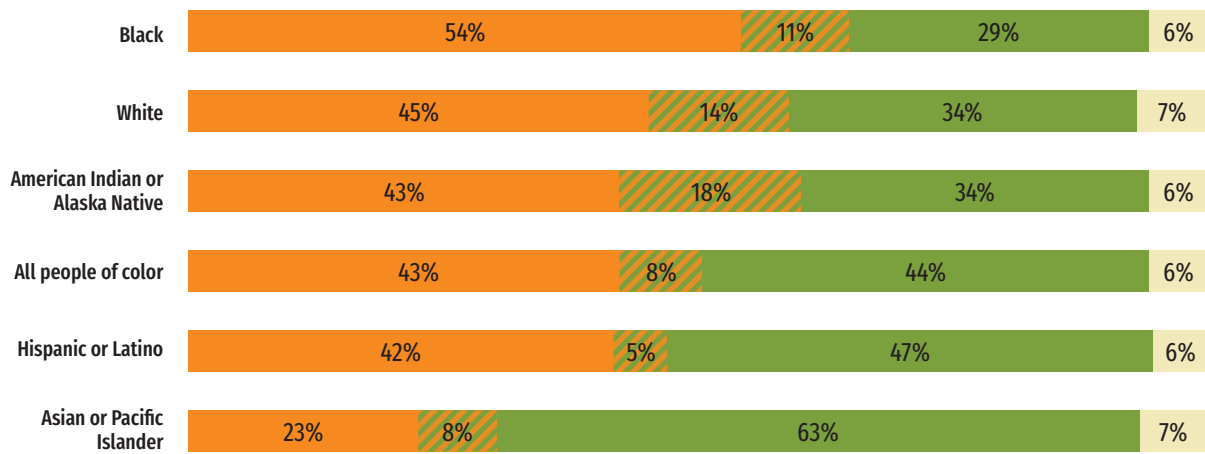
In addition to the national shifts across the policies discussed in this report, a clear regional divide has also emerged since 2020. As shown in **Figure 13** on the following page, states in the South and the Midwest have moved in an overwhelmingly restrictive direction, while states in the Northeast and West have generally moved in an expansive direction.

The South and the Northeast saw the most pronounced changes since 2020: 14 states in the South enacted a restrictive voting law discussed in this report, including 12 that enacted only restrictive laws. Conversely, in the Northeast, seven states enacted an expansive law, including six that enacted only expansive laws discussed in this report. No Northeastern state enacted only restrictive laws over the last four years. Voters will face a clear regional divide in 2024 depending on which area of the country they live in.

^e Note: Figure Y refers to the population of eligible voters, while Figure X refers to the population of adults (i.e., ages 18+, not necessarily voting eligible), based on available 2020 Census data.

FIGURE 12: THE MAJORITY OF BLACK ADULTS LIVE IN STATES THAT HAVE ENACTED ONLY RESTRICTIVE VOTING LAWS SINCE 2020

% of each racial/ethnic group, ages 18+, living in each type of state



Of the 8 policies in this report, states that have enacted:



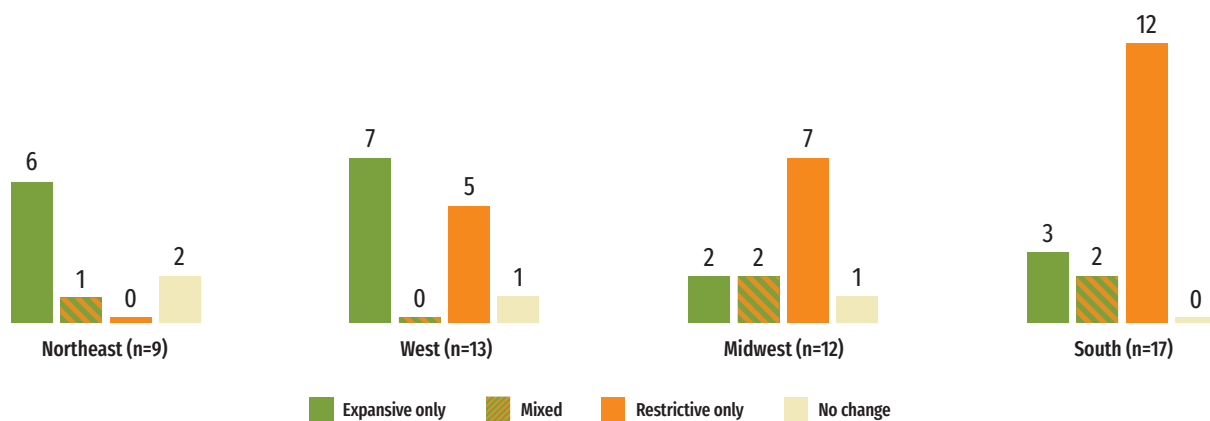
Note: All groups are non-Hispanic except for Hispanic or Latino and the “all people of color” category. Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Population data source: U.S. Census Bureau. “Hispanic or Latino, and Not Hispanic or Latino by Race for the Population 18 Years and Over.” Decennial Census, DEC 118th Congressional District Summary File, Table P11, 2020. Accessed May 2024.

State policy data source: MAP original analysis.

FIGURE 13: CLEAR REGIONAL DIVIDES IN EXPANSIVE AND RESTRICTIVE POLICIES SINCE 2020, PARTICULARLY IN THE SOUTH AND NORTHEAST

of states enacting expansive vs. restrictive voting laws since 2020, by region



Source: MAP original analysis. Regions defined according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s [4-Region Division](#).

Conclusion

The diverging trends highlighted in this report that have emerged since the 2020 election showcase the widening divide between states on how to run free, fair and accessible elections. The increasing polarization of states across the country in terms of voter access and the security and independence of elections will have an outsized impact on the 2024 election, spanning from how votes are cast to how elections are run and results are ultimately certified to reflect the will of the people. Voters casting their ballots this November will not only decide the candidates who will represent them going forward, but will also weigh in on the future of our democracy.

Endnotes

- 1 Ipsos. “[Heading into biggest election year ever, satisfaction with democracy is low.](#)” Data as of December 2023.
- 2 MAP. May 2023. [How Election Denialism Threatens Our Democracy and the Safeguards We Need to Defend It.](#)
- 3 MAP. February 2023. “[Protecting The Election Officials Who Protect Our Democracy.](#)”
- 4 MAP. “[Democracy Maps: Laws Protecting Election Officials Against Threats.](#)” Data as of June 2024.
- 5 Bipartisan Policy Institute. [Election Official Turnover Rates from 2000-2024.](#) Data as of April 2024.
- 6 Christopher Ingraham. June 2018. “[There are more guns than people in United States.](#)” *The Washington Post.*
- 7 Jelani Cobb. September 2020. “[Our Long, Forgotten History of Election-Related Violence.](#)” *The New Yorker.*
- 8 MAP. February 2023. “[Protecting The Election Officials Who Protect Our Democracy.](#)”
- 9 Oyez. November 2021. “[New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen.](#)”
- 10 Original analysis and bill tracking by MAP. Contact for more information.
- 11 MAP. June 2022. [Policy Spotlight: Automatic Voter Registration Best Practices in the States.](#)
- 12 Institute for Responsive Government. “[Automatic Voter Registration.](#)”
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 MAP. “[Democracy Maps: Automatic Voter Registration.](#)” Data as of June 2024.
- 15 Eric McGhee, Charlotte Hill, Mindy Romero. November 2021. [The Registration and Turnout Effects of Automatic Voter Registration.](#) SSRN.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 Oyez. June 2013. “[Shelby County v. Holder.](#)”
- 18 MAP. “[Democracy Maps: State Voting Rights Acts.](#)” Data as of June 2024.
- 19 Center for Tech and Civic Life. N.d. “[COVID-19 Response Grants.](#)”
- 20 MAP. “[Democracy Maps: Bans on Private Funding of Election Offices.](#)” Data as of June 2024.
- 21 Suevon Lee and Sarah Smith. March 9, 2016. “[Everything You’ve Ever Wanted to Know About Voter ID Laws.](#)” ProPublica.
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 MAP. “[Democracy Maps: Voter ID Requirements.](#)” Data as of June 2024.
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 Government Accountability Office. September 2014. [Issues Related to State Voter Identification Laws.](#)
- 26 CNN. “[2020 Presidential Election Results.](#)”
- 27 Matt Barreto, Stephen Nuno, Hannah Walker. November 2018. “[The Racial Implications of Voter Identification Laws in America.](#)” *American Politics Research* 47(2). DOI: 10.1177/1532673X18810012.
- 28 Brennan Center. September 2006. [Policy Brief on Voter Identification.](#)
- 29 MIT Election Lab. June 2022. “[Encouraging Voter List Maintenance Efforts.](#)”
- 30 MAP. “[Democracy Maps: Membership in Electronic Registration Information Center.](#)” Data as of June 2024.
- 31 Brennan Center. September 2023. “[A New Anti-Democracy Tool.](#)”
- 32 MAP. “[Democracy Maps: State Legislature Interference in Election Administration.](#)” Data as of June 2024.