



ELECTION ACCOUNTABILITY RESOURCES

A Primer on Election Law for State Officials

A Report Prepared by the

PUBLIC INTEREST
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We are pleased to officially launch the Elections Accountability Resources project, and to provide to you this *Primer on Election Law for State Officials*, a resource explaining election law to state legislators, state secretaries of state, state attorneys general, and citizens – four key players in fair elections.

As the nation's only public interest law firm dedicated wholly to election integrity, the Public Interest Legal Foundation has been fighting for fair elections for years. And while it continues that fight, it now seeks to share some of its election expertise with the other frontline workers holding elections accountable.

This report is meant to be a desk manual for those who work in election administration. It is a summary of the federal laws that deal with elections and voting. It is not meant to be comprehensive, as there is much more to election law than this document covers (campaign finance, for example). But it does give an overview of the key constitutional provisions and statutes that govern elections in America today.

This report also includes a glossary of key terms and acronyms in the back. This addition was made after a secretary of state mentioned to my staff that when he was elected, he felt like he encountered “alphabet soup” as he struggled to learn the acronyms of federal election offices and political and nonprofit groups. We want to help state officials more easily traverse the world of election law and election administration; therefore, we added the glossary to guide officials through the parlance of the industry so they could ultimately partner with the Public Interest Legal Foundation in our mission to promote election integrity.

Free and fair elections do not come about by accident. It takes a variety of actors promoting common sense policies to meet that goal. We hope this resource empowers you to promote fair elections with us.

Sincerely,

J. Christian Adams, President

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THE CONSTITUTION ON ELECTIONS AND VOTING

The United States Constitution, as the supreme law of the United States, sets forth the framework of the federal government, including conducting federal elections and electing the highest federal officers. The relevant constitutional provisions related to voting and elections are outlined below.

Right to Vote

The United States Constitution does not expressly guarantee a right to vote, but the United States Supreme Court has extended protections reserved for fundamental rights to the right to vote.¹ Several amendments to the United States Constitution expand or protect the right to vote:

- Fourteenth Amendment – This amendment, among other things, guarantees equal protection of the laws to all citizens and is often used to ensure all citizens are granted the right to vote.
- Fifteenth Amendment – This amendment prohibits the denial or abridgement of the right to vote on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. It bans election practices enacted with a racially discriminatory intent.
- Nineteenth Amendment – This amendment prohibits the denial or abridgement of the right to vote on account of sex.
- Twenty-Fourth Amendment – This amendment prohibits poll taxes in federal elections.
- Twenty-Sixth Amendment – This amendment made the eligible age to vote 18 years of age.

Case law has further shaped the right to vote, declaring that lack of United States citizenship and being convicted of a felony are permissible bases for denying voting rights, but certain durational resident requirements are not.²

Elections Clause

Article I, Section 4 of the Constitution gives states the authority to regulate the “Times, Places, and Manner” of holding congressional elections, though it specifies that “Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of chusing Senators.” *The Heritage Guide to the Constitution*³ describes the purpose of this provision as:

¹ See *Yick Wo v. Hopkins*, 118 U.S. 356, 370 (1886).

² See e.g., *Sugarman v. Dougall*, 413 U.S. 634, 649 (1973) (finding that citizenship is a permissible basis for denying voting rights); *Richardson v. Ramirez*, 418 U.S. 24, 56 (1974) (holding that laws that disenfranchise felons do not violate the constitution); *Dunn v. Blumstein*, 405 U.S. 330, 360 (1972) (finding durational resident requirements unconstitutional).

³ *The Heritage Guide to the Constitution* 71-72 (Edwin Meese III, et al. eds., 2005).

First, it made clear the division of responsibility with respect to the conduct of the election of federal Senators and Representatives. That responsibility lay primarily with the states and secondarily with Congress. Second, the clause lodged the power to regulate elections in the respective legislative branches of the states and the federal government, not with the executive or judicial.

Such interventions of Congress into the electoral process include the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, and campaign finance laws.

Qualifications to Run for Office

The Constitution does specify qualifications for certain federal offices. Article II, Section 1 specifies that the President must be a “natural born citizen,” at least thirty-five years old, and have been a resident within the United States at least fourteen years. The Twelfth Amendment applied the same qualifications to the Vice President. Article I, Section 3 stipulates that a United States Senator must be thirty years old, a citizen of the United States at least nine years, and from the state from which he or she was chosen. The requirements for a Representative, outlined in Section 2, are that he or she be at least 25 years old, have been a United States citizen for at least seven years, and be an inhabitant of the state of the congressional district of which he was chosen to represent. The Supreme Court has generally declined to find additional qualifications for these federal offices to be constitutional.⁴

Additionally, the Fourteenth Amendment provides disqualifications for federal office. It states that “[n]o person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof.” The amendment further states that “Congress may override this disqualification by two-thirds vote of each House.”

Methods of Electing Federal Officers

The method of electing Congressmen and Senators is addressed in Article I of the U.S. Constitution. Section 2 specifies that the House of Representatives shall be “chosen every second year by the People of the several States....” Section 3 originally specified that Senators be chosen every six years by the state legislature, but the Seventeenth Amendment changed the method of electing United States Senators to a popular election in 1913.

The method of electing the President and Vice President through the electoral college is set forth in Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution, and the Twelfth Amendment.

⁴ See *United States Term Limits v. Thornton*, 514 U.S. 779, 838 (1995) (finding that a state adding term limits for congressional candidates was unconstitutional).

THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965

The Voting Rights Act, also known as the VRA, was enacted by Congress in 1965. The VRA is codified at 52 U.S.C. §§ 10301-10314, 10501-10508, and 10701-10702 (formerly 42 U.S.C. § 1973 to 1973bb).

The Voting Rights Act contains several sections which, together, were designed to prohibit discrimination in voting. Some of these provisions reserve authority for enforcement to the Attorney General specifically, such as the provision allowing inspection of preserved election records, while other provisions allow private causes of actions. Below are summaries of the most well-known provisions, which are commonly referred to by the section number in the public law.

Section 2

Section 2⁵ of the Voting Rights Act is a nationwide prohibition against voting practices and procedures (including redistricting plans and at-large election systems and voter registration procedures) that discriminate on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group. Section 2 prohibits not only election-related practices that are intended to be racially discriminatory, but also those that are shown to have a racially discriminatory result. The majority of voting rights cases litigated today allege violations of Section 2 of the VRA.

Section 4

Section 4(a)⁶ of the Voting Rights Act sets forth criteria to determine whether a jurisdiction is covered under certain provisions of the VRA, namely Sections 3, 5, and 8, as enacted in 1965. The two elements of the formula are whether:

- 1) on November 1, 1964, the state or a political subdivision of the state maintained a “test or device” restricting the opportunity to register and vote. The Act’s definition of a “test or device” included such requirements as the applicant being able to pass a literacy test, establish that he or she had good moral character, or have another registered voter vouch for his or her qualifications.
- 2) if less than 50 percent of persons of voting age were registered to vote on November 1, 1964, or less than 50 percent of persons of voting age voted in the presidential election of November 1964, as determined by the Director of the Census.

Jurisdictions that fell within either of these criteria were required to submit any changes in election procedures to the Attorney General or the District Court of the District of Columbia for review under Section 5. The coverage formula changed slightly in the 1970’s and expanded the covered jurisdictions.

5 Section 2 is codified as 52 U.S.C. § 10301.

6 Section 4 is codified as 52 U.S.C. § 10303.

Section 5

Section 5⁷ of the Voting Rights Act, which is now dormant, says any change with respect to voting in a covered jurisdiction – or any political subunit within it – cannot legally be enforced unless and until the jurisdiction first obtains a determination by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia or the U.S. Attorney General that an election change is not discriminatory. The submitting authority bears the burden of proof that the proposed voting change does not deny or abridge the right to vote on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group. If the jurisdiction is unable to prove the absence of such discrimination, the District Court denies the requested judgment, or in the case of administrative submissions, the Attorney General objects to the change, and the change remains legally unenforceable.

But the Supreme Court in *Shelby County v. Holder* halted the application of Section 5 because it ruled the way states were covered was outdated and therefore unconstitutional.⁸ On June 25, 2013, the United States Supreme Court held that it is unconstitutional to use the coverage formula in Section 4(b) of the Voting Rights Act to determine which jurisdictions are subject to the preclearance requirement of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. The Supreme Court did not rule on the constitutionality of Section 5 itself; however, the effect of the *Shelby County* decision is that the jurisdictions identified by the coverage formula in Section 4(b) no longer need to seek preclearance for the new voting changes, unless they are covered by a separate court order entered under Section 3(c)⁹ of the Voting Rights Act.

Other Provisions in the Law

Section 3(a) and Section 8 of the Voting Rights Act give the federal courts and the U.S. Attorney General, respectively, authority to certify counties for the assignment of federal observers. Federal observers are assigned to polling places so they can monitor election-day practices in response to concerns about compliance with the VRA. Section 3 also allows a state or subdivision to be subjected to preclearance obligations if they are found by a United States District Court to have acted with a discriminatory racial intent in an election procedure.

Sections 203 and 4 of the Voting Rights Act require certain jurisdictions¹⁰ to provide minority language election materials and voting assistance regarding covered minority languages.

⁷ Section 5 is codified as 52 U.S.C. § 10304.

⁸ 570 U.S. 529 (2013).

⁹ This Section provides that in any litigation brought against a jurisdiction for an intentional voting discrimination in violation of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, the Court can require that the offending jurisdiction be subject to the preclearance requirements contained in Section 5 of the VRA.

¹⁰ A State or political subdivision is a covered State or political subdivision for the purposes of this subsection if the Director of the Census determines, based on the American Community Survey census data and subsequent American Community Survey data in 5-year increments, or comparable census data, that—

- (1) more than 5 percent of the citizens of voting age of such State or political subdivision are members of a single language minority and are limited-English proficient;
- (2) more than 10,000 of the citizens of voting age of such political subdivision are members of a single language minority and are limited-English proficient; or
- (3) in the case of a political subdivision that contains all or any part of an Indian reservation, more than 5 percent of the American Indian or Alaska Native citizens of voting age within the Indian reservation are members of a single language minority and are limited-English proficient; and

These provisions require that when a covered state or political subdivision provides registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, it shall provide them in the language of the applicable minority group as well as in the English language.

Section 208 of the Voting Rights Act provides that any voter who requires assistance to vote by reason of blindness, disability, or inability to read or write may be given assistance by a person of the voter's choice, other than the voter's employer or agent of that employer or officer or agent of the voter's union.

(4) the illiteracy rate of the citizens in the language minority as a group is higher than the national illiteracy rate. *See* 52 U.S.C. § 10503(b).

THE NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ACT (NVRA)

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993, codified at 52 U.S.C. §§ 20501 - 20511, is also known as the “NVRA” or “Motor Voter Law.” The NVRA imposes requirements regarding federal elections upon 44 states¹¹ and the District of Columbia. According to the U.S. Supreme Court, “[t]he [NVRA] has two main objectives: increasing voter registration and removing ineligible persons from the States’ voter registration rolls.”¹² The main sections of the law are:

Voter Registration at DMVs

The law requires the states to include an application for voter registration along with an application for a motor vehicle driver’s license.¹³ Further, any such application shall serve to update any previous voter registration application and any change of address form regarding a motor vehicle driver’s license shall also serve as a change of address for that person’s voter registration.

Federal Voter Registration Form

The law also requires states to accept and use the federal voter registration application form.¹⁴ Originally, Congress entrusted the Federal Election Commission with the responsibility of maintaining the form. After the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (“EAC”) was established by the Help America Vote Act of 2002, the EAC was given the task of maintaining the form.

A state may develop and use its own voter registration form so long as the criteria spelled out in the law are met. Even in that circumstance, the state must continue to accept the federal voter registration form.

Voter Registration at Public Assistance Agencies

The law requires states to direct certain agencies to serve as voter registration agencies.¹⁵ Agencies covered by this section include agencies that provide public assistance and agencies that provide State-funded services to persons with disabilities.

The law requires states to designate other offices as voter registration agencies too: “State or local government offices such as public libraries, public schools, offices of city and county clerks (including marriage license bureaus), fishing and hunting license bureaus, government revenue offices, unemployment compensation offices, and offices not described in paragraph (2)(B) that provide services to persons with disabilities.”¹⁶

¹¹ Six states are exempted from the NVRA due to the laws they had in place at the time the NVRA was enacted. Those six states are Idaho, Minnesota, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

¹² *Husted v. A. Philip Randolph Inst.*, 138 S. Ct. 1833, 1838 (2018).

¹³ See 52 U.S.C. § 20504.

¹⁴ See 52 U.S.C. § 20505.

¹⁵ See 52 U.S.C. § 20506.

¹⁶ See 52 U.S.C. § 20506(a)(3).

State Administration of Voter Registration

The law sets forth guidelines on how voter registration shall be administered, including setting a minimum cutoff deadline for accepting voter registration applications prior to the date of a federal election and requiring states to notify applicants as to the results of their applications.¹⁷

This part of the law, referred to as “Section 8,” also requires states to “conduct a general program that makes a reasonable effort to remove the names of ineligible voters from the official lists of eligible voters by reason of (A) the death of the registrant; or (B) a change in the residence of the registrant...”¹⁸ It further sets forth guidelines as to when registrants may be removed from the voter roll for other reasons, and sets forth the procedures a State may use to verify a registrant’s address. It stipulates that any State program must “protect the integrity of the electoral process by ensuring the maintenance of an accurate and current voter registration roll for elections for Federal office.... shall be uniform, nondiscriminatory, and in compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965” and “shall not result in the removal of the name of any person from the official list of voters registered to vote in an election for Federal office by reason of the person’s failure to vote.”¹⁹

Finally, the law requires states to maintain certain records and also make records available for public inspection.

¹⁷ See 52 U.S.C. § 20507.

¹⁸ See 52 U.S.C. § 20507(a)(4).

¹⁹ See 52 U.S.C. § 20507(b).

THE HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT OF 2002

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) is codified at 52 U.S.C. §§ 20901 - 21145 (formerly 42 U.S.C. §§ 15301 -15545). HAVA was enacted in response to issues and problems that arose during election administration in the year 2000, the most notable of which occurred in Florida, where disputes were ultimately decided by the Supreme Court of the United States in *Bush v. Gore*, 531 U.S. 98 (2000).

The issues addressed by HAVA can be divided into three categories: (1) minimum standards for the administration of federal elections; (2) federal grant programs for election administration; and, (3) creation of the federal Election Assistance Commission (EAC).

Election Administration

While HAVA sets minimum standards for certain aspects of federal election administration, it leaves states discretion over how to meet those standards.

Voting Systems

Each voting system used in an election for Federal office shall meet the following requirements:²⁰

1. Permit the voter to independently and privately verify and change her votes before they are counted;
2. Notify voters who have selected more than one candidate for a single office that they have overvoted, inform them of the effects of overvoting, and provide an opportunity to correct the ballot before it is cast and counted;
3. Produce a manually auditable permanent paper record that is available as an official record for recounts, and permit voters to change or correct their ballots before the manually auditable permanent paper record is produced;
4. Be accessible to voters with disabilities, including those with visual impairments, in a manner that provides the same opportunity for access and participation as for other voters, through the use of at least one direct recording electronic (DRE) voting system;
5. Provide alternative language accessibility as required by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965;
6. Keep clean voter rolls;
7. Comply with the error rate standards established under section 3.2.1 of the voting systems standards issued by the Federal Election Commission; and,
8. Adopt uniform and nondiscriminatory standards that define what constitutes a vote and what will be counted as a vote for each category of voting system used in the State.

²⁰ See 52 U.S.C. §§ 21081 and 21083.

Provisional Voting

HAVA requires individuals who do not appear on the official list of eligible voters or voters whose eligibility is challenged by an election official to be permitted to cast a provisional ballot if they provide written affirmation that they are registered and eligible to vote in the jurisdiction's elections.²¹ Each state must also establish a free system that allows individuals to check the status of their provisional ballots.

Voting Information

Election officials must post the following information at the polling places:²²

1. A sample ballot;
2. Information about the date of the election and polling place hours;
3. Instructions on how to vote;
4. Instructions for mail-in registrants and first-time voters;
5. General information on voting rights; and,
6. General information on laws prohibiting fraud and misrepresentations.

Statewide Voter Registration Database

HAVA requires each State to implement a single, uniform, official, centralized, interactive computerized statewide voter registration list that is defined, maintained, and administered at the state level.²³ Election officials must coordinate the statewide voter registration list with other agency databases in the state.

Voter List Maintenance

HAVA sets a minimum standard for the accuracy of state voter registration records.²⁴ Each state shall ensure that voter registration records are accurate and are updated regularly by doing at least the following:

1. Making a reasonable effort to remove registrants who are ineligible to vote from the official list of eligible voters;
2. Removing registrants in accordance with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA);
3. Coordinating the computer statewide voter list with state agency records on felony status and death;
4. Removing the names of ineligible voters from the computerized voter list in accordance with State law;

²¹ See 52 U.S.C. § 21082.

²² See 52 U.S.C. § 21082.

²³ See 52 U.S.C. § 21083.

²⁴ See 52 U.S.C. § 21083.

5. Ensuring that duplicate names are eliminated from the computerized voter list; and,
6. Establishing safeguards to ensure that eligible registrants are not removed in error.

Each state's chief election official must also facilitate the matching of information in the database of the statewide voter registration system with information in the database of the motor vehicle authority in order to verify the accuracy of the information provided on applications for voter registration.

Voter Identification

HAVA requires individuals who register by mail and who have not previously voted in a federal election in the state to present a copy of photo identification if voting by mail, or present a copy of photo identification or other identifying document (*e.g.*, utility bill), if voting in person.²⁵

Federal Mail Voter Registration Form

HAVA provides that the federal mail voter registration form must ask the applicant the following questions and statements:²⁶

1. "Are you a citizen of the United States of America?" and,
2. "Will you be 18 years of age on or before election day?"
3. "If you checked 'no' in response to either of these questions, do not complete this form."

If an application fails to answer the citizenship question, election officials must notify the applicant of the deficiency and provide an opportunity to correct the omission.

Grant Programs

Because complying with HAVA required significant financial investments by the states, Congress established grant programs.²⁷ Grants are available to help states (1) meet HAVA's federal election administration requirements; (2) make general improvements to federal election administration; (3) replace level and punch card voting systems; and, (4) research and develop improvements to the quality, reliability, accuracy, accessibility, affordability, and security of election systems.

To help ensure that grant funds are used as intended, HAVA provides for funding audits and repayments.

²⁵ See 52 U.S.C. § 21083.

²⁶ See 52 U.S.C. § 21083.

²⁷ See 52 U.S.C. §§ 20901-20904.

Election Assistance Commission

HAVA created a new agency to support general election administration called the Election Assistance Commission (EAC).²⁸ The EAC is a support agency with limited and defined duties:

1. Administering most of HAVA's grant programs;
2. Issuing voluntary guidance for how to implement certain HAVA requirements;
3. Researching and issuing best practices and reports, including the biennial Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS), which includes general research on election administration data and policies, in addition to congressionally mandated reporting on the NVRA;
4. Overseeing the Help America Vote College Program, which encourages students at institutions of higher learning to serve as poll workers.

In addition, the EAC provides for “the testing, certification, decertification, and recertification of voting system hardware and software by accredited laboratories.”²⁹

Enforcement

HAVA assigns federal enforcement to the U.S. Department of Justice.³⁰ Although HAVA has no private right of action, HAVA requires states receiving HAVA grant funds to establish state-based administrative complaint procedures to resolve alleged violations of HAVA's Title III requirements.³¹

²⁸ See 52 U.S.C. § 20902.

²⁹ See 52 U.S.C. § 20971.

³⁰ See 52 U.S.C. § 21111.

³¹ See 52 U.S.C. § 21112.

UNIFORMED OVERSEAS CITIZENS ABSENTEE VOTING ACT (UOCAVA)

The Uniformed Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (often called by its acronym UOCAVA) was enacted in 1986 and is codified in 52 U.S.C. §§ 20301-20311. It was later amended by the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act of 2009.

UOCAVA is intended to protect voting rights and access for citizens abroad when they are serving in the United States Uniformed Services and merchant marines. The Department of Defense administers the programs in the law. It also protects those members' resident family members and other Americans living outside of the country at the time of a federal election. Recent litigation³² found that even those Americans who are temporarily outside of the 50 states are covered under the statute.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program was established within the Department of Defense to liaise with state governments and provide resources to ensure compliance with the law.³³ In the event that a state or local election official is accused of a violation, the United States Department of Justice may commence civil prosecution.³⁴

Under the amendments affecting the 2010 general election and beyond, states are expected to do the following in regards to voters requiring UOCAVA protection:³⁵

- Provide voter registration and absentee ballot applications via electronic transmission;
- Provide absentee ballots no later than 45 days before a federal election except where an undue hardship waiver is granted by the Department of Defense;
- Ensure there are electronic security measures for ballot contents and user data;
- Accept the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB), a federal form that acts as a ballot for Americans overseas;
- Accept valid voter registration applications, absentee balloting applications, and ballots regardless of local notary, paper weight, or envelope standards; and,
- Allow free access to ballot tracking.

³² See *U.S. v. Wisconsin, et al.*, Case No. 18-cv-471 (W.D. Wis. 2018).

³³ See 52 U.S.C. § 20305.

³⁴ See 52 U.S.C. § 20307.

³⁵ See 52 U.S.C. § 20302.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

Below is a brief explanation of terms and acronyms to which are commonly referred in election policy. The terms refer to laws, government agencies, political entities, nonprofit groups, and election administration jargon.

Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL) = According to its website, this organization is a 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to “connect Americans with the information they need to become and remain civically engaged, and ensure that our elections are more professional, inclusive, and secure.” It has come into the news lately because it launched a grant program for the 2020 election that gave certain county and state election commissions grants, due to a \$350 million gift from Mark Zuckerberg.

Civil Rights Acts = These statutes date back to 1870, and were amended in 1957, 1960, and 1964. The law outlawed discrimination on the basis of race, color, and previous condition of slavery and literacy tests.

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) = This government agency describes itself as “an operational component of the Department of Homeland Security” that “works to understand, manage, and mitigate risk to the nation’s cyber and physical infrastructure in the public and private sector.” This office has an Election Infrastructure Security Resource Guide for state and local election officials and provides no-cost cyber and physical trainings and exercise services to enhance security and resilience of election infrastructure.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) = The federal agency tasked with securing the nation and keeping America safe. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) is under this department.

Elections Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC) = A partnership between the Center for Internet Security, CISA, and the Election Infrastructure Subsector Government Coordinating Council that offers state and local election officials a suite of elections-focused cyber defense tools.

Election Assistance Commission (EAC) = An “independent, bipartisan commission charged with developing guidance to meet HAVA requirements, adopting voluntary voting system guidelines, and serving as a national clearinghouse of information on the election administration.” It also certifies electronic voting systems, as well as audits the use of HAVA funds, and maintains the national mail voter registration form.

Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) = A nonprofit organization with a mission to work with member states to improve the accuracy of America’s voter rolls and increase access to voter registration for all eligible citizens.

Federal Election Commission (FEC) = The FEC is the regulatory agency charged with administering and enforcing the federal campaign finance laws that govern the financing of campaigns for the U.S. House, Senate, Presidency, and Vice Presidency. It is led by six Commissioners, no more than three of whom can belong to the same political party.

Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) = A postage-paid standardized document allowing Americans outside the country on election day to hand-write their candidates of choice for federal and other offices. They can also make notations about preferences regarding local ballot initiatives of other items.

Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) = A federal program that works to ensure that Service members and other U.S. citizens living overseas is able to vote.

Government Coordinating Council (GCC) = A council under CISA made up of government representatives from different levels of government to enable interagency and cross-jurisdictional coordination.

Help America Vote Act (HAVA) = Sweeping legislation that provides funds to states to improve the administration of their elections and assure access for individuals with disabilities. It also established the Election Assistance Commission, and put into law requirements for election technology administration and voting assistance programs for members of the military.

National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) = A nonpartisan association for the attorneys general and their staff of all states and territories.

National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) = A nonpartisan membership organization for the secretaries of state and lieutenant governors of all states and territories.

National Association of State Election Directors (NASED) = A nonpartisan membership organization of state and local Election Directors across the U.S.

National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) = A nonpartisan public officials' association composed of sitting state legislators from the United States. Its goal is to facilitate the exchange of information among legislatures, and to help improve the effectiveness of legislators and staff.

National Voter Registration Act (NVRA or Motor Voter Act) = The law that allows citizens to register to vote at all offices that provide public assistance, assistance to those with disabilities, and driver's license offices. It also requires most states to create and maintain a statewide voter roll.

Poll Book = This is a list of eligible voters who can vote in a particular district or precinct.

Public Interest Legal Foundation (PILF) = PILF is the only 501(c)(3) public interest law firm solely dedicated to election integrity and the author of this primer.

Sector Coordinating Council (SCC) = A self-organized council under CISA that enables "critical infrastructure owners and operators, their trade associations, and other industry representatives to interact on a wide range of sector-specific strategies, policies, and activities." These councils coordinate with Government Coordinating Councils (GCCs) to fully address infrastructure security and efforts for that sector.

Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) = Federal legislation that specifies the absentee voting requirements for federal offices for active members of the uniformed services living abroad.

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights = The commission is an independent, bipartisan government agency with a mission to inform the development of national civil rights policy and enhance enforcement of federal civil rights laws by holding briefings, conducting hearings, and publishing significant studies and reports. The commission is composed of eight Commissioners, four appointed by the President, and four by Congress, and no more than four can be of the same political party.

Voter Roll = The list of registered voters in a locality. Many states call their list the Qualified Voter Roll or the Qualified Voter Extract.



PUBLIC INTEREST
LEGAL FOUNDATION

32 E. Washington St., Suite 1675
Indianapolis, IN 46204
info@publicinterestlegal.org
317-203-5599