

VOTING LEGISLATION

The right to vote is fundamental to our American democracy and protecting that right should not be about party or politics. Congressional action on federal voting rights legislation must be the result of both Democrats and Republicans coming together to find a pathway forward or we risk further dividing and destroying the republic we swore to protect and defend as elected officials.

Below are areas of support and additions for Federal Voting Legislation and updates to the John Lewis Voting Rights Act.

Voting Legislation For the People Act Compromise

1. Make election day a public holiday (**New**)
2. Mandate at least 15 consecutive days of early voting for federal elections (include 2 weekends)
3. Ban partisan gerrymandering and use computer models (**New**)
4. Require voter ID with allowable alternatives (utility bill, etc.) to prove identity to vote (**New**)
5. Automatic registration through DMV, with option to opt out.
6. Require states to promote access to voter registration and voting for persons with disabilities and older individuals.
7. Prohibit providing false information about elections to hinder or discourage voting and increases penalties for voter intimidation.
8. Require states to send absentee by mail ballots to eligible voters before an election if voter is not able to vote in person during early voting or election day due to eligible circumstance and allow civil penalty for failure. (**New**)
9. Require the Election Assistance Commission to develop model training programs and award grants for training.
10. Require states to notify an individual, not later than 7 seven days before election, if his/her polling place has changed.
 - Absentee ballots shall be carried expeditiously and free of postage.
 - Require the Attorney General to develop a state-based response system and hotline that provides information on voting.
11. Allow for maintenance of voter rolls by utilizing information derived from state and federal documents.
12. Establish standards for election vendors based on cybersecurity concerns.
13. Allow provisional ballots to count for all eligible races regardless of precinct.

Campaign Finance

1. Amend the Federal Election Campaign Act to create a reporting requirement for disclosing reportable foreign contacts.
2. DISCLOSE Act
3. Honest Ads Act
4. Create “coordinated spender” category to ensure single-candidate super PACs do not operate as arms of campaigns.

Ethics

1. Increase resources for FARA office, creates FARA investigation and enforcement unit in Department of Justice and provides authority to impose civil penalties.
2. Require all Presidential appointees to recuse themselves from any matter in which a party is the President, the President’s spouse or an entity in which the President or President’s spouse has a substantial interest.
3. Prevent lobbyists from working on behalf of foreign entities.
4. Require the President and the Vice President, within 30 days of taking office, to divest financial interests that pose a conflict of interest or disclose information about their business interests.

Executive Branch Reforms

1. Require the disclosure of individual tax returns and certain business tax returns by Presidents and Vice Presidents, as well as candidates for the President and Vice President.

Updated John Lewis Voting Rights Act

1. Decrease the Attorney General’s authority to deem a state or locality’s actions a voting rights violation without a judicial finding of discrimination. (appeal process/hands of the court)
2. Remove Consent Decree as a definition of a violation.
 - Otherwise it removes the incentive to enter into an agreement; and
 - There is a concern that savvy lawyers could go into cash strapped localities and file suits knowing that localities don’t have the money to litigate and will enter into a settlement agreement. These same savvy lawyers could go around to other local communities and rack up voting rights violations to get a locality or state into preclearance.
3. Needs to have objective measures for determining whether a state or locality has a pattern of discrimination.

- The new language allows for determinations without accounting for voter participation or registration data.
4. Concern that the Injunctive relief standard is too subjective as it requires the complaint to “raise a serious question.”
 5. There needs to be clarity on how states or localities exit out of preclearance.