



TEACHING TOLERANCE

A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER
TOLERANCE.ORG

VOTING RIGHTS AND RESTRICTIONS

THESE POLICIES & PRACTICES MAKE IT EASIER TO REGISTER AND VOTE

Voter preregistration

Eligible future voters can complete and submit their registration forms in advance, so they're automatically entered on the voter rolls when they turn 18. (In some states, preregistration begins at 16.)

Automatic voter registration

Future voters are automatically registered when they submit common forms to the state government (for example, when they get their drivers' licenses).

Online voter registration

Future voters can register online rather than having to print and submit or mail in their registration form.

Same-day (or election day) voter registration

Voters don't have to register ahead of time. They can register and vote at the same time.

Restoration of voting rights

A criminal conviction does not mean a voter permanently loses their right to vote.

No-excuse opportunities to vote by mail or absentee

Voters don't need an excuse to request an absentee or vote by mail ballot. They can fill out their ballots at home and return them in person or by mail.

Early voting opportunities

Voters can go to certain polling places ahead of election day to vote at a time that is convenient to them and to avoid long lines.

THESE POLICIES & PRACTICES MAKE IT HARDER TO REGISTER AND VOTE:

Strict voter ID requirements

Voters who don't already have state-approved IDs may have to pay and find time to get an approved ID card before they're allowed to vote.

Voter roll purges

In some states, voters can be removed from the voting rolls if they don't vote regularly or if there is a discrepancy between their signature on their voter registration form and their I.D. In states with regular voter roll purges, people are often incorrectly removed from the voter rolls but don't know until election day, when it is too late to correct the error.

Insufficient polling locations

When there aren't enough polling places, lines get very long very quickly. Too few polling places in cities or distant polling places in rural areas can mean that voting might take almost an entire day.