



I am a voter.

I'M VOTING
FOR OUR
FUTURE

FAIR
ELECTIONS ✓
CENTER

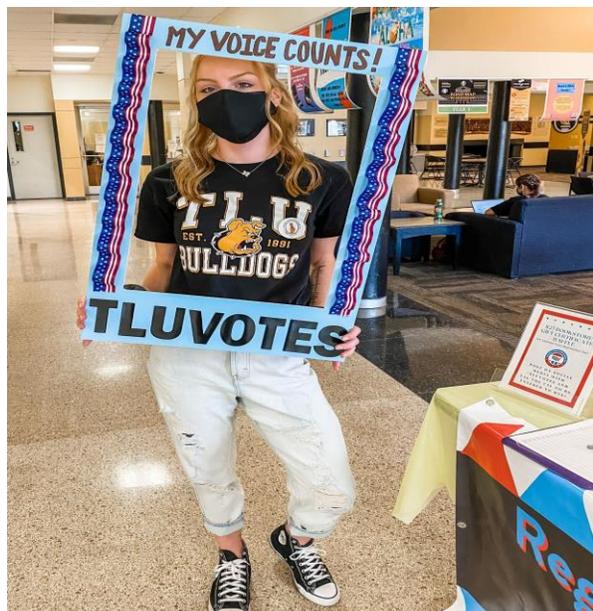


Introduction

A tsunami of voter suppression bills, sham partisan reviews of election results, and an insurrection at the Capitol to overturn a ratified election of the president are all warning signs that voting rights in the United States are under serious attack. This report catalogs Fair Elections Center's work in 2021 to counter these anti-democratic forces, protect access to the ballot box for all citizens, and expand the franchise for historically marginalized communities, and the next generation of younger voters.

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A Letter From Our President

Friends,



This year witnessed not only a grotesque attack on the U.S. Capitol to overturn the free and fair election of President Joseph Biden, we also saw an unprecedented assault on voting rights, an attack unseen since the days before the Voting Rights Act of 1965. At least 19 states passed 34 laws restricting access to voting. Additionally, more than 440 bills that contained provisions that would restrict voting access were introduced in the year's state legislative sessions. In an alarming new direction, lawmakers introduced bills that would allow partisan takeover of vote tabulation and in some extreme cases, permit legislatures to nullify an election if partisan lawmakers didn't agree with the results. It is a stark reminder of the importance of our work.

To counter the seemingly ceaseless attack on voting rights, Fair Elections Center takes a multi-pronged approach. In 2021, we spent a considerable amount of time monitoring legislative actions and weighing in with testimony opposing bad bills and supporting bills that further protect people's freedom to vote. Our legal team continues to fight anti-democratic laws that have been passed in the courts, and we have continued our robust program of getting people to sign up to be poll workers – a serious task because a shortage of them is often cited as the reason for long lines or for the closure of polling locations.

We also focused on the executive branch in 2021: working with administration officials on ways to expand voter registration opportunities, in response to President Biden's Executive Order on Promoting Access to Voter Registration and Voting. We also met with leaders at the Department of Education to promote better ways to engage students to register to vote and become lifelong participants in our democracy. We pushed for fuller participation in the Higher Education Act's requirement that all institutions of Higher Education educate students about voter registration and provide access to forms or online voter registration, as well as exploring using the FAFSA (federal financial assistance) form as a way to connect prospective college students to voter registration.

Additionally, we advocated for changes to the federal government's main online voter registration site, [vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov), pushing to expand it to include more languages and improving its functionality for voters with disabilities. We urged the administration to have the Department of Health and Human Services do more with the ACA Health Exchanges as a vehicle to register people to vote while signing up for health insurance, to incentivize more federally-funded



kerry washington ✓
@kerrywashington

Who's voting early?!?!

 Fair Elections Center @fairerelections · Oct 13, 2021

We're celebrating #VoteEarlyDay on Oct. 23 to make sure our friends, family, and coworkers know about their options to vote early! Millions of Americans have the option to vote ahead of Election Day this fall. Learn more at voteearlyday.org #VoteEarly #VoteReady

Fair
Elections
Center
supports
#VoteEarlyDay



community health centers to engage in voter registration and to work with the Indian Health Service to support voter registration and voter education in Native American Communities.

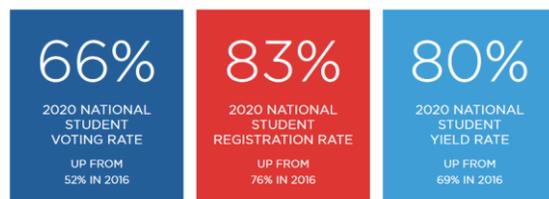
Two members stepped back from our Board of Directors to take positions in the Biden Administration. **Justin Levitt** was named Senior Advisor for Democracy and Voting Rights, and **Erika Moritsugu** was named Deputy Assistant to the President and Asian American & Pacific Islander Senior Liaison. In other news, we welcomed **Maya Patel** to the Board. She is a Masters in Public Policy candidate at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin. Maya primarily works on youth and student voting rights and environmental policy. She has held roles as the Texas State Coordinator at Campus Vote Project, Environmental Engagement Coordinator for Texas State Representative Gina Hinojosa, and was an MTV “Leader for Change.”

Following the 2020 Census, states began the process of redrawing district lines. Knowing how college and university campuses are often split into separate districts – therefore diluting the impact of student voting – we launched a new redistricting initiative that brought together college students to engage with their state’s mapmaking process. Ultimately, we had 28 passionate redistricting fellows working in 8 states, who submitted maps identifying campus communities, provided testimony to legislative committees and redistricting commissions, wrote op-eds and letters to the editors, educated their peers and created resources to share with our wider network. You can read more details on page 6.

Another highlight from the year was the November release of our report, “Every Year, Every Vote: Principles and Policies to Protect the Freedom to Vote.” Legal advocates, activists, government officials, educational institutions and voters all have a role to play in protecting the freedom to vote and maintaining a healthy and resilient democracy, but we must do this work all year, every year, not just in federal election years. Throughout our 15-year history, it’s become clear that there is no such thing as an ‘off year.’

Though much of 2021 was bleak on the voting rights front, there were signs of hope for the future. As we saw with the results of our historic 2020 investment in student democratic engagement through our Campus Vote Project, student voting increased dramatically to 66% in the last Presidential election, nearly matching the national average. Tufts University's Institute For Democracy and Higher Education announced the results of its 2020 National Study of Voting and Engagement which showed student voting participation in last year’s presidential election increased 14 percentage points from 2016. Our campus partners achieved even greater increases in voting rates. This was welcome news, and it brings to mind the fact that our work engaging college and university students can have a meaningful impact on our democracy.

2020: Record-Breaking Turnout and Student Resiliency: Student-Level Data



We’re looking forward to taking on the challenges ahead in 2022.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Brandon
President and CEO

Every Year, Every Vote

In November, we released our report, *"Every Year, Every Vote: Principles and Policies to Protect the Freedom to Vote"* which outlines the way we approach our work toward building a stronger democracy, and expanding the freedom to vote for all American voters.



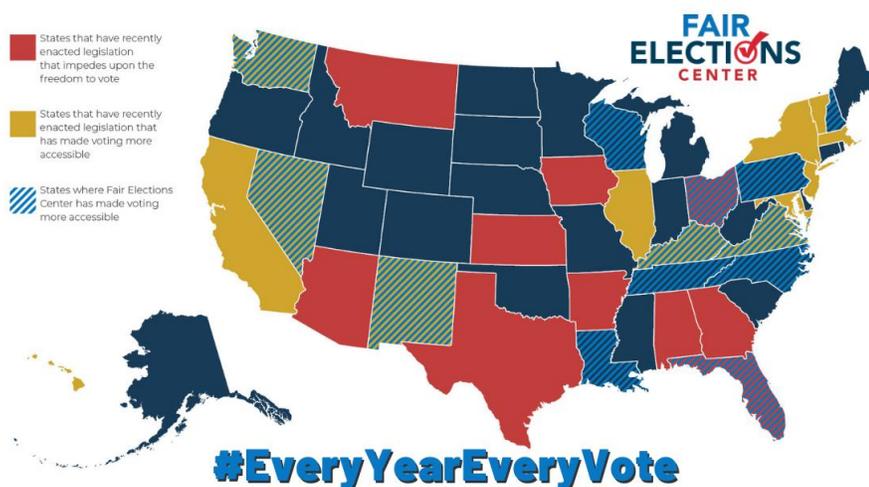
Based on our years of successful work to remove barriers to voting and improve election administration nationwide, *Every Year, Every Vote* calls on policymakers, election administrators and voting rights advocates to prioritize key investments during non-federal election years that will continually increase voter participation in each election cycle.

Recommended areas of investment include:

- Litigation against barriers to voter registration and access
- Advocacy for federal, state & local legislation and policies that protect the freedom to vote
- Youth civic engagement
- Poll Worker recruitment and training
- Information and technical assistance for civic engagement organizers
- Support and technical assistance for election administrators

The report further addresses how barriers to voter participation uniquely impact students and young people who are newly eligible to vote, drawing on the work of our Campus Vote Project, which works with students on college campuses around the country to increase youth voting.

With a new wave of attacks on voting in state legislatures across the country, and a debate over federal voting rights legislation that will help determine the future of our democracy, our work to maintain a robust, sustained effort to protect the freedom of all eligible Americans to cast their ballot is more important than ever.



Every Year, Every Vote is available at <https://www.fairelectionscenter.org/every-year-every-vote>

Redistricting

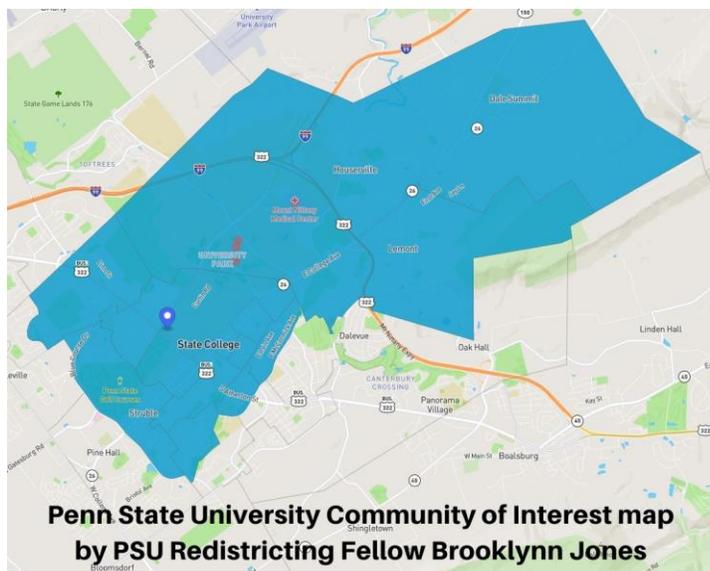
Fair Elections Center's Campus Vote Project launched the [Redistricting Fellowship](#) in 2021 to ensure that college student voices are heard in redistricting processes happening across the United States. While other organizations were empowering young people and college students to be engaged in state redistricting work, our efforts specifically focused on protecting local, campus communities. A national redistricting manager was hired to join the FEC Special Project Manager to administer the program, and supervise the 21 students across 18 campuses and eight states to lead student redistricting advocacy in the states in which we were working.

"As a team, we have been able to make clear to state leaders that college student voices are an integral part of the redistricting process. Campus communities are unique and need to be protected when drawing new district lines. I am grateful for everything we have been able to accomplish together at Campus Vote Project."



Vincent O'Neal
Redistricting Fellow and senior
at Carthage College (WI)

History has shown that college and university campuses are often targets of partisan gerrymandering, diluting students' voting power by splitting campus communities into multiple districts. Splitting campus communities makes it more challenging for students to know who their representatives are and hinders their ability to effectively advocate for their and their community's interests. It also means that students who live in the same community vote at different polling locations, and vote for different representatives and ballot measures. This is especially confusing for young, often first-time voters to navigate, especially when students are already faced with some of the most unique and difficult barriers to voting.



Our redistricting efforts were focused in nine of the states where Fair Elections

Center's Campus Vote Project was already making a significant impact: Florida, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin. Because each state's redistricting process is different, we developed strategic action plans with state-specific outcomes. Our redistricting work was strategic, prioritizing efforts that maximized our impact in each state.

Highlights from our impact:

- Thousands of college students and engaged and empowered across nine states
- 1,563 Community of Interest campus maps drawn and submitted
- 140 verbal testimonies provided and written testimonies and comments submitted
- 14 op-eds and letters to the editor published by campus, local, and state newspapers
- A national press call showcasing our work to protect campuses from gerrymandering
- More than 4000 hours of redistricting research and advocacy

Campus Vote Project



In early January, two months following the 2020 General Election, 43 Democracy Fellows in Georgia supported the U.S. Senate runoff elections. They worked nearly 5,000 hours, reaching 246K+ voters via text banking, social media and peer-to-peer contacts. Messages on registration, mail balloting and in-person voting from our digital campaign, both paid and through social media, were seen more than 11 million times and more than 65,000 potential voters clicked through to voter information or took other action. In the end, more than 340,000 voters aged 18-29 years old voted in the Georgia runoff election -- over 80% of the eligible voting bloc.

Our Voter Friendly Campus team reviewed hundreds of partner campus reports on their 2020 election work, and in March, the latest class of [Voter Friendly Campus](#) designees were announced. A record 236 university and college campuses from 38 states and the District of Columbia were represented. In the Fall, the 2020 Voter Friendly Campus report was released, which summarized how institutions that teamed up with Campus Vote Project navigated student voter engagement for a national election during the pandemic.

CVP National Director Mike Burns and several other student voting right leaders met with Domestic Policy Advisor Susan Rice and White House Public Engagement Director and Senior Advisor Cedric Richmond to discuss how to increase voter participation and expand access to the ballot box for younger voters. Mike shared CVP's unique experience working with college administrators to institutionalize student democratic engagement, and ways the Department of Education could promote it.



Pennsylvania State Coordinator Ricardo Almodovar (L) and Midwest Regional Manager Chuck Black, at the PA Capitol for a redistricting hearing



Nine state voting summits were conducted in the Fall and Spring semesters across all of our states with coordinators (GA, FL, MI, NC, OH, PA, TX, VA and WI). Fall summits reached 596 individual participants, 167 institutions, in collaboration with 57 organizations, while the Spring summits reached 181 participants, 73 institutions, in collaboration with 24 organizations.

The 2021 Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement conference in June was co-sponsored by CVP. Held virtually this year, the conference is hosted annually by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' American Democracy Project and NASPA, the organization representing student affairs officers. CVP presented a session on our Voter

Friendly Campus program, which we run in partnership with NASPA, previewing insights and best practices from the 2020 election. Nearly 600 people attended online, a mix of campus administrators, faculty, and students.

In a new role this year, CVP's HBCU Manager conducted a series of in-depth conversations with campus administrators. Their feedback will be incorporated into an updated version of the

existing HBCU Insight Brief from 2020, which included student perspectives on issues surrounding student engagement on Historically Black College and University campuses.

Campus Vote Project [Democracy Fellows](#) were located on 135 campuses, which served a total of nearly 2 million students. These dedicated student advocates worked tirelessly to engage the peers to become educated on voting and urged them to show up at the polls and participate in their local, and in some states, state elections.



CVP engaged with promoting the important civic engagement holidays, National Voter Registration Day (which shared our 50-state Voter Registration Drive guides on its website), National Voter Education Week (which included our annually-updated 50-state Voter Guides in its programming), Vote Early Day and Election Hero Day, celebrating the important role of election administrators and poll workers.

Investing in Voting Rights Activists of the Future

One of the core tenets of the Campus Vote Project is training and uplifting college students to be civic leaders, primarily through our **Democracy Fellows** program. Fellows are challenged to implement programs on their campuses that will remain long after they graduate. To facilitate



Elisha Azize
Democracy Fellow and junior
at Clark Atlanta University

"Campus Vote Project evokes students to become leaders in their own right. CVP doesn't provide you with one face of leadership, but instead provides you with the tools you need to figure out what leadership looks like to you and for your campus."

that work, we have created a Leadership Development curriculum, incorporating topics such as the history of the voting and civil rights movements, equitable and inclusive organizing, and redistricting into

their orientation. Over the year, Fellows participated in mandatory Discussion Blocks that taught them about misinformation, digital organizing, student advocacy, event planning, and redistricting, including how to draw Community of Interest Maps. Additionally, Democracy Fellows were offered training opportunities on advocacy, communication, how to spot implicit bias, op-ed writing, how to use redistricting mapping software, fundraising, and poll working. The most popular optional events that were introduced this year were the Political Professions Panels, which featured speakers from different political professions that CVP students could potentially pursue after college. Professions featured included: Law, campaign management, young elected officials, political fundraisers, legislative staffers, non-profit leaders, journalists, data analysts, and communications professions.

The [Student Advisory Board](#) is a smaller cohort of university students who serve to provide structure and contextualization for Campus Vote Project Democracy Fellows entering the student voting rights space. They developed a nationwide [Student Voting Network](#), which now has more than a thousand student activists from around the country, sharing ideas and tactics for student engagement. It also launched its SNVCast, a podcast aimed at student voting rights activists.

Members of the Student Advisory Board also engage in individual activities to support and expand on CVP's mission. Kamryn Yanchick, a senior at the University of Oklahoma, spearheaded research for the Native American Voting Rights Coalition with help from FEC Litigation Director Jon Sherman. She developed survey items for Native student voters relative to their democratic engagement on tribal colleges and universities across the country. Macklin Zehr, a junior at Middle Tennessee State University, worked closely with Southeast Regional Coordinator Rachel Clay to make the Voter-Friendly Campus pitch to multiple universities within Tennessee. Meanwhile, Tiara Badie, a 3L at Marquette University Law School, is working to institutionalize student voting within the law program at Marquette. These and other endeavors point to the value that the Student Advisory Board brings to CVP's work.

Advocacy and Litigation

Federal Voting Rights Legislation - H.R. 1 and S.B.1

As crucial voting rights legislation moved through Congress, we helped educate hundreds of our Democracy Fellows and thousands of their fellow students over the importance of federal legislation to guarantee our basic voting rights. We issued several statements throughout the year to the press, on the importance of passing the then For The People Act (later The Freedom to Vote Act) and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. With 2021's tsunami of anti-voter bills that were introduced across the country – and more coming in 2022 – federal legislation to protect voting rights has never been more urgently needed.

Native American Voting Rights Act of 2021

As a founding member of the Native American Voting Rights Coalition, our legal staff provided input into a bill being designed to secure voting rights for Native American populations. Introduced by Sen. Ben Ray Lujan, NAVRA aimed to set consistent standards for voting on tribal lands and most provisions were added to the new version of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. Some of its key provisions include:



- Improving access to voter registration, polling places, and drop boxes in Indian Country;
- Streamlining the process for adding polling places on tribal land;
- Permitting tribes to designate buildings to be used as an address to register;
- Providing uniformity for voting on tribal lands in federal elections;
- Requiring states to provide a reason for rejection of provisional ballots;
- Culturally appropriate language assistance; and
- Requiring pre-approval of changes in election procedures.

State Legislative Advocacy

Our litigation and policy team [provided testimony](#) to state legislatures in Florida, Louisiana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Texas, Virginia and Washington state, in opposition to bills that would make it more difficult to vote, and in some instances, in support of bills that would expand the franchise. A portion of the advocacy included letters to governors urging them to veto anti-voter legislation, and some to secretaries of state, imploring them to work with legislators to remove barriers to voting.

Litigation

We secured a ruling in our rights restoration case in Kentucky. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit's ruling revived our clients' claims, reversing the District Court's determination that their First Amendment challenge to Kentucky's rights restoration process for people with felony convictions was moot.

Three years ago, we teamed up with the Kentucky Equal Justice Center and filed a [lawsuit](#) on behalf of eight Kentuckians with felony convictions in their past. The case claimed that the restoration scheme, which gives the governor absolute power over whether our clients can regain the right to vote, is unconstitutionally arbitrary. In August 2020, the federal district court dismissed the lawsuit as

moot, citing Gov. Andy Beshear's executive order restoring some categories of felons, but not others. Because three of our clients were among those excluded from restoration under that order and still could only regain their right to vote by petitioning the Governor, the case was not moot, and we appealed. The three-judge panel remanded the case to the district court for a ruling on the merits of our clients' constitutional claims. We're gratified that our clients will finally have their day in court.



In Florida, we joined the Southern Poverty Law Center and filed a [lawsuit](#) in the summer on behalf of the Harriet Tubman Freedom Fighters, challenging provisions of a 2021 Florida law known as SB 90. Under one of the provisions, the state forces community organizations to warn



voter applicants that the organization "might not" submit their registration on time, even though these organizations and their volunteers make every effort to submit applications on time in compliance with state deadlines. The new requirements make it less likely that potential voter applicants will submit registrations through community groups, a process that helps increase participation in many communities of color. The trial is

expected to commence in January, 2022.

In December, we joined the League of Women Voters Wisconsin, Law Forward and the law firm Stafford Rosenbaum in a [lawsuit](#) aimed at reinstating more than 31,000 registered Wisconsin voters who were purged from the state's voter rolls in July. The case is pending.



Work Elections/Poll Worker Recruitment

Fair Elections Center staff worked with a web developer to design and launch an updated WorkElections API and [website](#) in the spring of 2021. This project created a version of the website that is more secure, more user-friendly, and easier to maintain than its predecessor.



Starting in July 2021, WorkElections staff conducted targeted research and outreach to election officials across the country, reiterating WorkElections' and Power the Polls' long-term commitment to helping with poll worker recruitment. Inquiries about jurisdictions' current poll worker recruitment situation were made, their needs for 2021, their recruitment plan for 2022, any updates to poll worker information and applications, and for details on how WorkElections can best be of help going forward. In total, 517 jurisdictions were contacted (just under 10% of all jurisdictions in the WorkElections database).

The WorkElections.com database was updated to reflect recent changes to poll worker requirements and to incorporate newly launched online application websites. For example, Alabama moved from requiring poll workers to be registered voters of the precinct they work in to requiring them to be registered voters from anywhere in their county. Wisconsin launched a statewide poll worker application website, enabling individuals from any part of the state to apply online. This was added to WorkElections for any Wisconsin jurisdiction that did not already have its own online application.

In the summer and fall of 2021, Power the Polls, which Fair Elections Center helped launch in 2020, maintained the project's social media presence and activity. They have:

- Maintained PTP social media accounts to promote poll working, provide details about duties of poll workers, share information around elections (such as registration deadlines), and also broadcasted calls for additional workers in states experiencing poll worker shortages. Created all graphics and wrote all social copy.



- Published weekly newsletters to continue promotion of poll working to users who signed up via Power the Polls in 2020. Sent targeted newsletters to users in states that have reported poll worker shortages for 2021 elections, including New Jersey, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

- Continued partnerships with other nonprofit orgs around various national civic holidays, such as National Voter Registration Day and Vote Early Day. Created social graphics and published newsletters to connect the value of poll working in conjunction with celebration of these holidays.

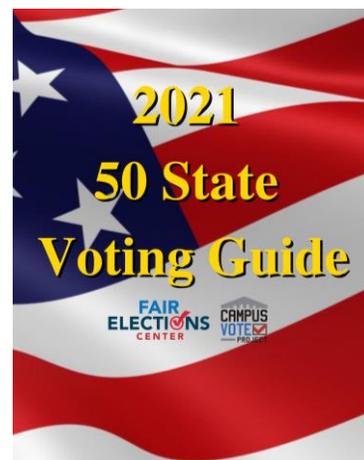
- Updated auto mailers for new sign-ups to more clearly direct users through the process of officially signing up to work as poll workers with their local election office. Maintained the info@powerthepolls.org / partners@powerthepolls.org email inbox and responded to PTP users who had follow up questions about the poll working process.

Essential Voting Materials

Each year, Fair Elections Center updates the concise, user-friendly resources that we have created to help voters understand how to register, vote, and help others to register to vote. As laws change and courts weigh in throughout the year, our legal staff continually make updates to the materials, so our partners and anyone visiting our website has the correct information to better participate in the nation's elections.



Along with links to official voting websites, our state-specific voting guides include important registration deadlines and election dates, voter registration requirements, voter ID requirements, links to forms, and options on how to cast a ballot. We also provide answers to common questions for students and guidance on where students can register to vote, be it their campus address or back home.



Voter registration drive guides contain requirements for third parties conducting voter registration drives. They include requirements for gathering forms, where to return them, deadlines, and links for forms or other information. In 2021, these state guides

were also co-branded with the National Voter Registration Day logo and shared on the NVRD website.

Earned Media

We continued our work with the communications firm Berlin/Rosen on our media outreach in 2021. By year's end, Fair Elections Center and its programs garnered more than 800 earned media hits in numerous major outlets, as well as in many regional newspapers and news websites. Additionally, we place op-eds in several key publications.

Select examples of coverage

 **NBC NEWS** April 1 [Republicans, defending voter restrictions, point finger at Blue states](#)

 **politics** July 1 [26th Amendment, granting 18-year-olds the right to vote, marks its 50th anniversary](#)

 **Associated Press** May 30 [Iowa flap raises fears of politicized local election officials](#)



August 3 [Democrats, Republicans clash over voting rights, elections security](#)

The Washington Post

April 9 [New limits on food, water at GA polls could hinder Black, low-income voters](#)

 USA TODAY™

April 30 [Biden's 100 days: Where some of the president's early executive orders stand now](#)

Bloomberg

June 17 [Republicans fall short in voting rights crackdown while adding hassle at the polls](#)

 CBS NEWS

March 5 [Activists want to save voting rights by killing the filibuster](#)

 INSIDE
HIGHER ED

June 21 [How the For The People Act would impact Higher Ed](#)

 U.S. News & WORLD REPORT

April 9 [How voting laws suppress the 'New South'](#)

 Rolling Stone

March 4 [Democracy on the brink](#)

 Orlando Sentinel

August 16 [Legisladores republicanos amenazan a voluntarios de registro de votantes con delitos](#)

 TULSA WORLD

October 28 [How to become a poll worker—and other ways to encourage voting](#)

 Newsmax

April 8 [GOP critics: Blue states have voting laws stricter than Georgia's](#)

 PACIFIC RADIO
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LOS ANGELES

July 6 [Activist SCOTUS undermines democracy at term's end](#)

 NEWSONE

August 28 [Strom Thurmond filibustered voting rights. 64 years later, advocates want Senate action](#)

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PODCAST
americatrendspodcast.com

November 1 [Voter suppression efforts gaining traction across the United States](#)

Published Op-eds



April 26 [Democracy is good for business. Corporations should support expanding voting rights](#) (by Cecilia Aguilera)



March 8 [Independent voters will be harmed by electoral reform proposal](#) (by Jon Sherman)



December 9 [Redistricting Commission should keep Michigan colleges, universities together](#) (by Jonathan Flynn & Katie Ellison)



April 20 [Young people can't afford to stay on the political sidelines](#) (by Ja'Neese Jefferson)



November 28 [Florida Redistricting: Bring peace of mind to college campuses](#) (by Andrew Taramykin and Elizabeth Rodriguez)



July 20 [The promise of the 26th Amendment remains unfulfilled on its 50th anniversary](#) (by Rosalyn Baker & Whitney Williams)



December 13 [Texas redistricting needs to protect campus communities](#) (by Jocelyn Carrera and CJ Cetina)



October 18 [Beshear shouldn't get to pick and choose who gets to vote based on criminal record](#) (by Jon Sherman and Ben Carter)



December 26 [Virginia must protect voting rights in the state Constitution](#) (by Cecilia Aguilera)



October 29 [Local governments can and must act to protect voting rights](#) (by Robert Brandon)

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