

Why You Should
VOTE



How to Register to Vote

Almost 70% of the eligible U.S. population is registered to vote.

Voter turnout for the 2022 U.S. congressional elections was the second-highest for a non-presidential election year since 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau says.

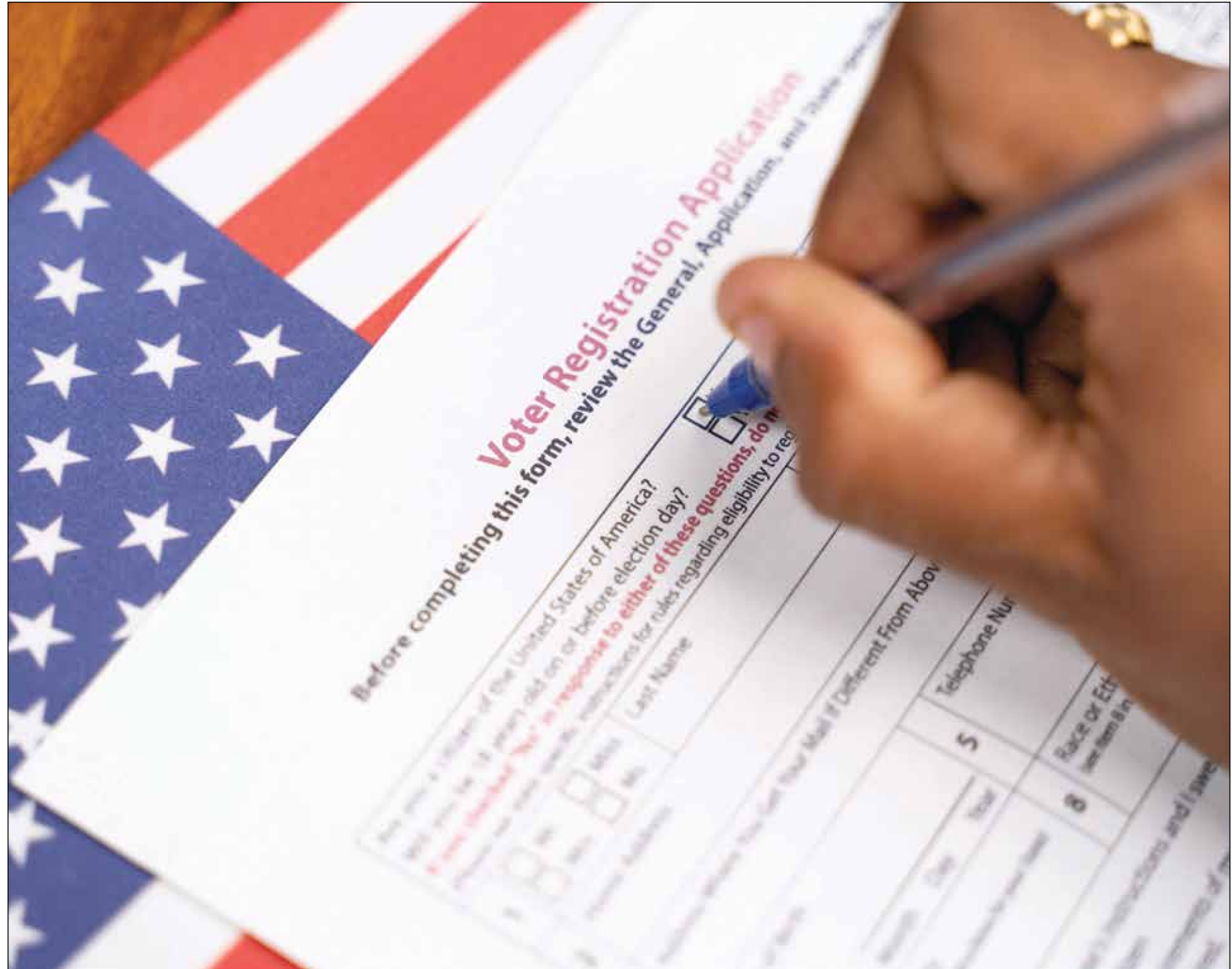
JOIN THE RANKS OF REGISTERED VOTERS

You can register for local, state and federal elections all at once, whether it's online through [Vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov) or at your local department of motor vehicles or secretary of state, when you register for a driver's license or other identification. You may also be able to register to vote at armed services recruitment centers or state or county public assistance offices.

Overseas and military voters can register to vote and request an absentee ballot as part of the Federal Voting Assistance Program ([fvap.gov](https://www.fvap.gov)). It covers service members and their families living overseas as well as any other overseas citizens.

VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINES

There is no national voter registration deadlines. Each state and territory sets the deadlines. Some states require voters to register up to 30 days before an election while others allow registration on Election Day. Make sure you



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know the rules in your state so that you can make your voice heard.

Registering After a Move

One of the first things to do after moving is change your address. If you're already a registered voter, you'll get your new voting information when

you get your new driver's license or ID card. If you're moving to another state, and you miss that state's voter registration deadline, your old state may allow you to vote by mail or in person. In presidential elections, your old state must allow you to vote by mail

or in person. After then, you should register in your new state.

CHANGING YOUR PARTY AFFILIATION

Not every state requires you to select a party affiliation, but some states do, which includes

independent and other parties with enough members to meet state requirements. The voting process should be the same in a general election, regardless of your party, but your affiliation may affect who you can vote for in primary elections and caucuses.

Congressional Elections

Elections for the U.S. Congress take place every two years.

These elections determine who represents you in the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate. These elections decide which political party will hold a majority in each chamber of Congress for the next two years.

MIDTERMS

Every two years, voters choose a third of the senators and every one of the 435 members of the House. Midterm elections take place halfway between presidential elections. The last midterm elections, in 2022, saw the highest registration rates since 2000. The next national election will be held when Americans elect a new president in November 2024.

THE U.S. HOUSE

There are 435 members of the House of Representatives, as provided by Article 1, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution. They serve two-year terms and the number of representatives from each state are determined by the U.S. Census.

To be elected, a representative must be at least 25 years old, a U.S. citizen for at least seven years and an inhabitant of the state they represent. The Speaker of the House is elected by the representatives and is third in line of succession to the presidency.



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The U.S. House has the power to initiate revenue bills, impeach federal officials and elect the president in case of a tie in the Electoral College.

THE U.S. SENATE

There are 100 senators, two for each U.S. state. Until 1913, senators were chosen by the state legislatures, but since then, they've been elected to six-year terms by the people of

each state.

Senators must be 30 years old, U.S. citizens for at least nine years, and residents of the state they represent. The vice president serves as president of the Senate.

The Senate has the power to confirm presidential appointments that require consent, to provide advice and to ratify treaties. However, the House must also approve appoint-

ments to the vice presidency and any treaty that involves foreign trade. The Senate also tries any impeachment cases.

THE 118TH CONGRESS

When taken together, this particular House and Senate make up the 118th U.S. Congress. Congress is the only branch of the federal government that can make new laws or change existing laws. The

president, as the head of the executive branch, may veto Congress' bills, but Congress may override that veto with a two-thirds vote in both the Senate and House.

Congress sets the budget for the government, levies taxes and tariffs to provide funding and authorizes borrowing. Congress holds investigations and holds the sole power to declare war.



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Voter Fraud Basics

Election crimes are generally investigated by the FBI's Public Integrity Section.

Election crimes that are federal crimes are those that involve a ballot with one or more federal candidates, involve an election or polling place official that abuses their office, involve false voter registration, involve a crime that intentionally targets minority protected classes, or involve violating federal campaign finance laws.

PROTECTING YOUR VOTE

To make sure you cast your vote legally, the FBI says it's important to know exactly when, where and how you will vote. Look at election information from trustworthy sources and verify the information. Consider the

intent of the people who wrote the information.

Report any potential election crimes, including disinformation about the manner, time or place of voting, to the FBI. You can do so online. The bureau also encourages you to make use of in-platform social media tools to flag suspicious posts that appear to be spreading false or inconsistent information about voting and elections.

VOTER SUPPRESSION

Voter suppression involves deceiving qualified voters to prevent them from voting. It is, the FBI says, a federal crime. Bad actors can use social media, texting or other messaging to provide misleading information about the time, manner or place of voting. The FBI says it includes those who provide incorrect election dates or false

claims about voting qualifications or methods. Always look at the source of the voting information. Official government websites usually end in .gov. Confirm any voting information with local election officials.

THREATS AGAINST ELECTION WORKERS

Another federal crime is to threaten election workers and volunteers. The FBI, along with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, investigate these threats and are taking them especially seriously after the contentious 2020 election cycle, the bureau says. The Department of Justice established the Threat to Election Workers Task Force to investigate and prosecute these threats.

MORE FEDERAL CRIMES

The FBI says the following are also

federal crimes:

- A voter gives false information when registering to vote, such as false citizenship claims.
- A voter casts a vote when they are ineligible to vote.
- A voter votes more than once or uses someone else's name to vote.
- Someone changes a ballot tally or engages in other corrupt behavior as an elections official.
- Someone provides a voter with money or something of value in exchange for voting for a specific party or candidate in a federal election.
- Someone threatens a voter with physical or financial harm if they don't vote or if they vote a certain way.
- Someone tries to prevent qualified voters from voting by lying about the time, date or place of an election.
- Campaign finance crimes.

Voter ID Requirements

Thirty-six U.S. states have laws requesting or requiring voters to show some form of identification at the polls, the National Conference of State Legislatures says.

Your state's laws determine whether you will need to show identification and, if so, what kind. First-time voters who did not register in person or show ID before must show identification according to federal law.

VOTING WITHOUT AN I.D.

You may still be able to vote even if you do not have the identification that your state asks for. Some states may ask you to affirm your identity or let you cast a provisional ballot. Provisional ballots are kept separate until the state can investigate and confirm your identity and eligibility to vote.

You may have to return or present a form of identification by a certain deadline to have your vote counted.

NAME OR ADDRESS MISMATCHES

You may have to cast a provisional ballot even with the correct form of identification if the name or address on your form of identification does not match the address on your voter registration.



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Some examples of this would include if you got married or changed your name and updated your voter registration, but your identification still has your old name on it. Or, you could move and present a current utility bill for your voter identification, but your registration still has your old address on it.

UPDATING YOUR REGISTRATION

You will need to update or change your voter registration if you change your name, move or want to change your political party affiliation. You can change your registration online at vote.gov or by otherwise following your state's rules. You can mail in the National Mail

Voter Registration form unless you live in New Hampshire, Wyoming or North Dakota; or you can get help through the Federal Voting Assistance Program if you live overseas.

CONFIRM YOUR CHANGES

Make sure that you are still registered to vote and that all

your information is correct by checking your registration at the National Association of Secretaries of State at nass.org/can-i-vote. Here, you will be able to register to vote, check your status, find your polling place, see valid forms of identification, learn about absentee and early voting, or find out how to become a poll worker.

What Do Elected Officials Do?

Our elected officials help to run and guide our country.

Here are some of the officials we elect and what they do.

MAYOR

Mayors are the top executive in a city, municipality or town government. They often oversee public works departments, which can include fire and police services, emergency medical services and sometimes utilities. You can contact your mayor's office with questions and problems about city or municipality issues.

SHERIFF

Sheriffs are the chief law enforcement officers in their counties. Depending on the state, sheriffs are responsible for law enforcement, corrections and court services. They may enforce court orders, serve warrants and legal papers, perform evictions and perform other duties. In most places, the sheriff's office or department is separate from municipal police forces, which is headed by a chief of police, who may be elected or appointed, depending on the structure that municipality has set.

STATE LEGISLATURES

Members of state legislatures, the ones that make that state's laws, set budgets and compose that state's legislative branch, are elected. Each



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state's constitution determines the terms legislators serve. Every state except Nebraska has a bicameral legislature made of two chambers. Nebraska has just one chamber in its legislature.

STATE GOVERNORS

The governor of the state is the chief executive of that state. Governors are elected by the people, usually along with the lieutenant governor, the attorney general, the secretary

of state and other officials.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

There are 435 members of the House distributed amongst the 50 states in proportion to their population as determined by the U.S. Census Bureau. There are also six non-voting members from the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the

Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands.

Members of the House are elected every two years. The House has the exclusive power to initiate revenue bills, impeach federal officials and elect the president in the case of a tie in the Electoral College.

The House must approve any appointments to the vice presidency and approve any treaty that involves foreign trade.

U.S. SENATE

The U.S. Senate has 100 members, two from each state. Until 1913, members of the Senate were chosen by the state legislatures; since then, they've been elected by the people every six years. Their terms are staggered so that a third of the Senate is elected every two years.

The Senate has the sole power to confirm presidential appointments, provide advice and ratify treaties.

Slim Margins in History

It can be easy to say that, amid the millions of votes cast in the U.S. on election days, that our lone vote won't count.

But that's not true, as these elections show. Here are some of the slimmest margins of victory in U.S. elections.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, PENNSYLVANIA 2ND, 1826

John Sergeant and Henry Horn tied at 1,597 votes. The governor finally called a new election when both Sergeant and Horn relinquished their claims. Sergeant defeated former representative Joseph Hemphill in a special election.

VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES, DISTRICT 19 RACE, 1971

An initial vote count had Republican William Moss ahead of Democrat Jim Burch by one vote. A circuit court then ruled that a ballot was defaced because the names of two candidates were crossed out with a note, "Do not desire to vote for these two." The person who cast the vote (it was a signed absentee ballot) testified that he intended to vote for Moss, but the court tossed it anyway, creating a tie. The names of the two candidates were placed in sealed envelopes and the blindfolded Elections Board chairman



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picked the winner from a silver loving cup. Moss won.

U.S. SENATE, NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1974

An initial tally of votes declared the race for Republican Louis Wyman by 355 votes out of more than 220,000. A recount, however, gave the race to his opponent,

John A. Durkin, by just 10 votes.

Another recount gave it back to Wyman by two votes. The outgoing Senate agreed to seat Wyman, but the new Senate, controlled by Durkin's party, took up the matter again until Durkin agreed to a new election. Durkin won that by 27,000 votes.

NEW HAMPSHIRE SENATE REPUBLICAN PRIMARY, DISTRICT 16, 1980

Incumbent Frank Wageman was hospitalized and unable to vote, leaving him in a tied election. Two numbered balls were placed in a leather bottle and the first to roll out, Wageman's, was named the winner.

WYOMING HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DISTRICT 21, 1994

Republican Randall Luthi and Larry Call, an independent, both received 1,941 votes. On NBC's Today Show, Secretary of State Kathy Karpan drew a ping pong ball with Luthi's name on it of the governor's cowboy hat, naming Luthi the winner.

SOUTH DAKOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DISTRICT 12, 1996

Democrats John R. McIntyre and Dick Casey faced off against Republicans Hal Wick and Judy Rost.

In an initial count, McIntyre had 4,195 votes; Casey 3,889 votes; Wick 4,191 votes; and Rost 4,687. McIntyre was declared the winner by four votes, but Wick asked for a recount, which showed he won by one vote. The South Dakota Supreme Court took the case and examined several ballots, invalidating a vote for Wick. The House then voted to seat Wick.

MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 6TH WORCESTER DISTRICT, 2010

Peter J. Durant was initially declared the winner by one vote, however, Judge Richard T. Tucker ruled that an initially discarded absentee ballot should be counted for Durant's opponent, Geraldo Alicea, tying the race. A special election was held six months later and Durant won by 56 votes.

Perks for Voters

As if deciding the future of one of the greatest countries on Earth isn't enough, there are some other perks for casting your ballot.

FREEBIES

Krispy Kreme in 2016 gave away free donuts to anyone adorned with an "I Voted" sticker, frequently given out at the polls. Other freebies that year included coffee from 7-Eleven, cookies from Great American Cookies, a free drink at Firehouse Subs or a voucher for a free pizza at Marco's Pizza.

For the stressful 2022 presidential election, you could stress eat until a winner was declared. Boston Market gave away sliders after 9 p.m.; Chili's had Presidente Margaritas for \$5; GrubHub offered deals and McDonald's served up free bakery treats.

A website called Pizza to the Polls allowed voters waiting in line to search for nearby pizza places that would bring pizzas or dispatch food trucks so they could eat while waiting to vote.

RIDES AND CHILD CARE

Ride-sharing apps gave away free rides to the polls in 2020 and in 2016, some YMCA locations had free or discounted childcare to make sure parents had time to head out to the polls. Hertz added a bonus day around Election Day 2020 at certain locations and Lyft dis-

counted rides and scooters. Lime, a bike-share and scooter company, also offered up free Election Day rides in 2022.

WORK IT OUT

In 2022, some Gold's Gym locations offered free access to

participating locations with an "I Voted" sticker. Planet Fitness offered a free HydroMassage from Nov. 3-8 in 2022.

BUT IS IT LEGAL?

Technically, no. Anyone giving anyone anything in

exchange for a vote is technically a violation of federal law. However, if businesses offer the goods to everyone or certain people who are counted regardless of whether they voted (say, members of a company's rewards program), they're in

the clear. This was especially helpful during the pandemic-plagued 2020 and 2022 elections, which made voting by mail more popular. Mail-in voters often didn't get the all-important sticker to unlock a lot of these freebies.

