Bipartisan Policy Center

# 10 Things to Know about the 2024 Presidential Election

1. **Roughly 244 million Americans will be eligible to vote in 2024.** The 2020 election saw record turnout of 66.6% of eligible voters. If we see turnout that high again, more than 162 million ballots will be cast by November.

2. **Elections start earlier than you think.** Federal law requires military ballots be sent out 45 days before Election Day. Thus, the presidential primary ballot is locked in every state by early April.

3. **Ballots for the 2024 general election must be finalized by early September.** This deadline is firm, even as BPC expects litigation on various issues to last beyond that date.

4. **The die is cast—for the most part.** BPC recommends against major legislative or administrative changes to the voting process in federal election years because they may cause confusion and undermine confidence.

5. **Some states and counties are considering changing from machine counting of ballots to hand counting.** Humans are demonstrably worse at repetitive counting than machines. Such a change should be discouraged at _any_ time, but doing so during a presidential election year can lead to slow reporting of results and increase distrust in the system.

6. **Minor, proven tweaks to policy can still dramatically improve the election.** Forty states allow for pre-Election Day processing of absentee ballots, but other states—including battlegrounds like Pennsylvania and Wisconsin—do not allow processing of ballots until Election Day, leading to longer waits for unofficial results.

7. **Election administration has improved dramatically over the past decade, but progress has been uneven.** BPC [recommends minimum standards](#) for election administration across voter registration, casting ballots, and counting of results in return for federal funding. Only Georgia and Colorado meet all these standards, while 26 other states meet at least three-quarters.

8. **Election results are not going to be final on Election Day—and they never are.** States' certification deadlines range from two to 29 days post-Election Day. It is imperative that ballots are [tabulated quickly and accurately](#), as the period between the close of polls and tabulation of sufficient results to confidently call the race is a prime window for misinformation.

9. **The post-Election Day process is littered with potential pitfalls**. One issue BPC is tracking is the local certification of vote totals, which in recent years has been prolonged by litigation. Electoral College deadlines for presidential elections are immovable, and such protracted litigation around local certification threatens to put Americans' votes at risk.

10. **Not all state deadlines align with those established by the Electoral Count Reform Act**. If recounts and challenges extend into December, BPC expects state and federal litigation to emerge to impact election outcomes.