

United in Security:

How Every State Protects Your Vote

The Bipartisan Policy Center, the R Street Institute, and the Institute for Responsive Government detail the security and integrity protections that make American elections strong, resilient, and trustworthy in every jurisdiction.

Updated in February 2026

States ensure that only eligible voters can vote.

Voters must meet [federal and state eligibility requirements](#) in their jurisdiction in order to register to vote.

States must maintain [voter registration processes](#) that allow only eligible voters to vote and to vote only once.

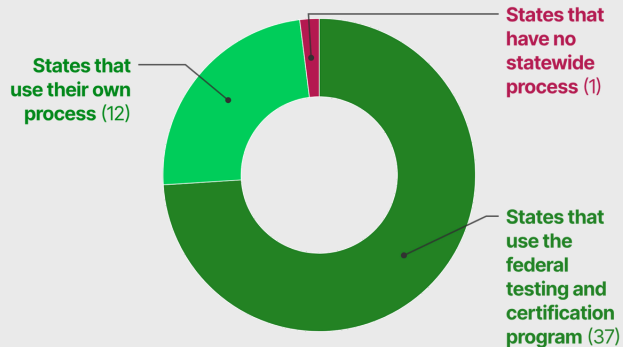
All 49 states that require voter registration [regularly conduct list maintenance](#) to remove voters who have moved, died, or otherwise lost eligibility. This resulted in the removal of over 21 million records from voter lists during the 2024 election cycle.

[Perpetrators of election fraud and voter intimidation are investigated and prosecuted](#), as well as face jail times and hefty fines.

44 states [verify that absentee ballots are sent by the intended voter](#). They do this by conducting signature verification, requiring a witness or notary signature, or requiring a driver's license or partial social security number.

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States confirm the accuracy of voting equipment.



Almost every state has a process for testing and approving voting equipment.

Most states rely on a federal testing and certification program that has been in operation for almost 20 years.

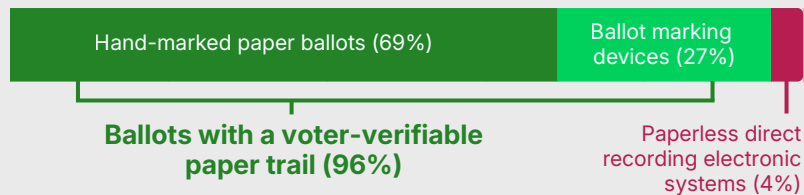
Election officials in every state test voting equipment before every election to verify the equipment is working as intended.

Voting machines must meet federal standards for minimizing errors.

Voting systems must produce a paper record for audits and recounts.

49 states conduct a post-election audit, which may involve recounting a sample of ballots by hand to confirm that the outcome was correct.

96% of voters in 2026 will likely vote on a ballot with a voter-verifiable paper trail.



States have transparent, accountable elections.

Federal law requires election officials to retain ballots and other election-related materials for 22 months after a federal election in case a recount or investigation needs to take place.

Every state allows members of the public or political party designees to be poll watchers and observe tabulation or other election processes.

Election officials have procedures to maintain and document the location and status of ballots and voting equipment, ensuring that all elements of the election system are accounted for.