

Voter Suppression in Michigan

ACLU Michigan



The Voter Suppression Package

ACLU Michigan

Key Policy Takeaways

- This package is a vehicle for making it harder to vote and testing what they may put in a ballot initiative, even if some of the policies have previous bipartisan support.
- Two main ways they damage the process - increasing barriers to voters, weakening ability to fairly count and certify results.
- They would take us backwards from the progress made with Prop 3 of 2018
- While these are MI specific, absolutely part of a coordinated, national attack

Strict Voter ID: 285, 303 & 304

- These bills will remove the secure affidavit option voters without certain government issued ID utilize to prove who they are.
- Will even require voters submit a copy of government-issued photo ID with absentee ballot application, not just in-person voting.
- Michigan's current system is a model for other states that balances security with accessibility and it has worked without incident for decades.

Absentee Voting: 273, 285-287, 308 & 310

- Prohibits proactive distribution of AV applications (including links) by SOS
- Bans paid return postage of AV ballots
- Additional burdensome and costly restrictions on ballot drop-boxes including closing of boxes 5pm the day before an election
- Prohibits guidance from SOS that signatures on AV ballots should be presumably correct

Registration: 302

- Requires voter to certify that “the elector does not claim voting residence or the right to vote in another state or territory.” This requirement is vague – voting residence laws vary among states – and could discourage registration.
- Unnecessary because the form already authorizes cancellation of a prior registration.
- Could become the basis for an investigation of a voter who is confused and certifies incorrectly.

Challengers & Inspectors: 275-276, 290, 294 & 309

- Outlaws nonpartisan poll challengers and gives their rights to campaigns. Only allows challengers from Democratic or Republican party. Increases allowable # of challengers.
- Gives challengers new basis for challenging and right to issue complaints and allows video recording of counting process in polling places and AV boards.
- Arbitrary ratio requirements for inspectors present from each party in polling place and requirement to balance poll book every hour that could create disruption if not met.

Canvassers: 273 & 296-299

- Expands the size of County Boards of Canvassers based on population up to 6 or 8 members from 4 and extends time required to certify elections.
- Gives extra power to approve ballot dropboxes
- Overall, further politicizes the role of County Boards of Canvassers and creates more vulnerabilities in a system that has worked for over 60 years.

Funding: 284 & 289

- Private funding of election activity and equipment is prohibited. Conditional federal funds can't be spent except by legislative appropriation and funds not appropriated within 90 days of receipt must be returned to the federal government.
- Could put a significant dent in election funding with federal funding being held hostage or not spent, resulting in election staff shortages, ballot processing delays, longer lines, etc.

Qualified Voter File: 282

- Prohibits “access” to QVF except for election officials. This ban is unclear and could affect election and education efforts based on using the QVF, beginning with every private voter file.

The Strategy

This is a long-game strategy...

- Phase 1: Community Education and Narrative Building (Direct lobbying, legislative briefings, public education, coalition building, etc.)
- Phase 2: Accountability (Legislative hearings, business/donor influence, direct action, etc.)
- Phase 3: Grassroots Action (Decline to sign campaign or similar endeavor)

Getting Involved

- Receive updates on opportunities to get involved from the ACLU. Email Jessica Ayoub at jayoub@aclumich.org
- Call or email your state senators and tell them to oppose voter suppression efforts
 - MI Senator: www.senate.michigan.gov
- Call or email members of the [Senate Elections Committee](#)
- Spread the word: Talk to influential members in your community and get them to speak out and contact their state senators