



# REV UP Toolkit: Protecting the Right to Vote in States

The 2020 election cycle saw a record-breaking number of voters cast their ballots, particularly voters with disabilities, voters of color, and voters of color with disabilities. In response to this diverse and unprecedented turnout, lawmakers have introduced hundreds of state bills to restrict access to voting. Bills that try to restrict access to voters of color and voters with disabilities directly oppose the access to democracy that American Association of People with Disabilities' (AAPD) REV UP Campaign advocates for. REV UP's mission is to foster civic engagement and protect the voting rights of Americans with disabilities, and we cannot build the power of the disability vote if hundreds of laws make voting even more inaccessible to our communities.

This toolkit provides background information on the state bills that will impact the right to vote and links to resources and tools that you can use to organize your community and fight back against discriminatory bills attacking the right to vote, and protect access to the ballot.

## State Bills Impacting Voting

### How are states moving to limit or expand voting rights?

Across the country state legislatures are introducing hundreds of bills either to expand or restrict the right to vote. Many states made changes to their election laws during the 2020 elections to ensure more people could vote without going to the polls on Election Day, and some states are trying to make these additional voting times and options permanent. Meanwhile, other state lawmakers are trying to restrict voting rights and

limit access to the polls. According to the [Brennan Center for Justice](#), over 360 bills have been introduced in state legislatures in 47 states that will restrict access to voting.

These restrictive bills often specifically target voters with disabilities and voters of color, particularly Black voters, and Black disabled voters. Many of these bills try to reduce access to absentee and mail-in voting which were essential voting methods that allowed voters, including those with disabilities, to vote safely during the pandemic. Other restrictive bills, such as Arizona's House Bill 2701, increase requirements for forms of identification that people with disabilities, people of color, and seniors are less likely to have. Some bills will also give partisan political leaders more control over elections, such as Georgia's Senate Bill 202 which has been enacted into law.

Overall, state bills to limit voting access focus on several types of voter suppression, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Restricting access to mail-in voting
- Increasing voter ID requirements
- Reducing opportunities to vote
- Reducing voter registration opportunities
- Limiting the availability of ballot drop boxes
- Purging registered voters

Some of these bills have already passed, like Georgia's Senate Bill 202 which restricts absentee voting, eliminates mobile voting, limits drop boxes hours, and more. Additionally, the Florida state legislature passed Senate Bill 90 which limits access to drop boxes, increases ID requirements for absentee voting, and more. In Texas, North Carolina, Arizona, and many more states, similar bills threaten to restrict access to our communities. Check out the resources in the next section to learn how to find out what bills threaten democracy in your state and how you can get involved in advocacy.

## **What can I do to protect the right to vote from bills trying to restrict voting rights and access in my state?**

REV UP coalitions, partners, and organizers can help by advocating to protect voting rights and prevent restrictive voting bills. In Texas, Georgia, and other states, REV UP voting coalitions have actively fought against harmful voting legislation. They are doing so by raising the attention of communities and the media around these bills, educating people on why these bills harm our democracy, and mobilizing their communities to contact their legislators and tell them not to restrict their voting rights. You can help protect voting rights in your community by:

1. **Researching Bills in Your State** - Find out what bills are active in your state by using search engines, local news sources, or the Brennan Center for Justice's [state bill tracker](#) which categorizes bills across the country.
2. **Connecting with REV UP** - Connect with your local REV UP representatives in your state to participate in their voting rights advocacy. In Texas and elsewhere, REV UP organizers are actively fighting against several harmful anti-democratic bills. You can contact Lilian Aluri at [laluri@aapd.com](mailto:laluri@aapd.com) to connect with REV UP in your state or start your own REV UP coalition.
3. **Joining Others** - Reach out to other disability, voting, and civil rights organizations in your area to find out if they are leading advocacy efforts that you can support. Some national organizations with local and state chapters include the [National Disability Rights Network](#), the [National Council on Independent Living](#), [State Voices](#), the [NAACP](#), the [League of Women Voters](#), and many more!
4. **Tell Others** - Once you learn about how bills in your state legislature will impact voters, tell others in your community about the bills how they will impact you. Spreading the news about harmful anti-voting bills is one way to build momentum against these bills in your state and community. You can tell others wherever and however you feel most comfortable - in conversation, in a text or email, on social media and more. Here are some talking points you can use:
  - My vote is my power and my sacred right. (insert the legislation) tries to take away that power.
  - (Insert the legislation) will specifically discriminate against voters with disabilities, like me.
    - Mention the specific ways that the bill discriminates against voters with disabilities, voters of color, and disabled voters of color. For example, in Georgia, SB 202 restricts absentee and dropbox voting. These measures will make voting lines much longer than they already are. Another measure requires voters to travel to the correct precinct if they arrive at the wrong polling location before 5 p.m., instead of allowing them to cast a provisional ballot as previously allowed.
  - I care about (insert issue you care about such as healthcare, climate change, etc.) and the passage of this bill would put up access barriers that would keep voters with disabilities like me from participating in democracy.
5. **StopJimCrow2.com** - Fair Fight Action has put together resources and information on [StopJimCrow2.com](#) on how to fight against voter suppression in Arizona, Georgia, Florida, Michigan, New Hampshire, North Carolina, and Texas. The website also includes general tools and information for organizers in other states. Note that Fair Fight Action may do partisan advocacy work as a (c)(4)

organization, so if you are a (c)(3) nonprofit organization, then you will need to refrain from any partisan activities.

**6. Contact Your Lawmakers** - Contact your state legislators to educate them on how specific bills in your state will impact your right to vote and which bills they should vote “no” on or which they should support. You can find out who your state legislators are and how to contact them at [congress.gov](http://congress.gov). Here are some talking points you can use:

- When you call your legislators, you may talk to a staff person. You might need to leave a message.
- When calling, introduce yourself and state the city/county you live in and which piece of legislation you are calling about.
- State how the bill would restrict or prevent your ability to cast a ballot as a person with a disability.
- You can say that you want to make your voice heard by exercising your right to vote but that (insert the state bill) would make it impossible for you to do so.
- If you would like, state that it is critical that you vote because you care deeply about a particular issue (ex. Healthcare or climate change)
- For example, if you were a voter in Texas calling your state senator about SB7, an anti-voting bill, you might say the following:
  - Hi, I am a voter from Houston, Texas and I am calling about Senate Bill 7. I am a person with a disability and SB7’s drive-thru voting ban would make it harder for me to access my polling place. I care about my community and want to make my voice heard on issues through voting. I urge (state senator) to vote no on SB7.
- Make your points as personal as you would like. The legislators and their staff want to hear about your specific concerns.

## Additional Resources

- [State Voting Bills Tracker](#) | Brennan Center for Justice
- [StopJimCrow2.com](#) | Fair Fight Action
- [Digital Toolkit](#) | We Make the Future