

Protecting the Right to Vote: Where the Presidential Candidates Stand

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is committed to open and fair elections. The landmark Voting Rights Act of 1965 stopped states from enacting racially discriminatory voting restrictions. Yet over the past decade, laws fostering voter suppression across states and localities have been on the rise. The 2013 *Shelby County v. Holder* Supreme Court decision gutted key protections, making way for discriminatory and restrictive voting laws that disproportionately impact people of color, women, voters with disabilities, and young and older voters.

The Facts: States with the Strictest Voting Laws¹

	Strict Voter ID Laws	Exact Match Law	Some/All Felony Disenfranchisement	No Early Voting
States	AZ, AR, AL, GA, IA, ID, IN, KS, MS MT, NC, OH, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, WI	KS, GA	DE, IA, KY, MD, MI, MO, TN, VA	AL, CT, MI, MO

In our post-*Shelby* world, laws have been enacted by state legislatures making our rights to vote infinitely harder.² These restrictive measures include strict photo ID requirements, closing of polling locations, voter purges, limiting translations of voting materials, limitations to absentee ballots or same day voter registration, felony disenfranchisement, digital disinformation, and the drawing of election districts in such a way that diminishes the power of voters of color. With so much at stake each time we head to the ballot box, particularly in an election year when Americans are struggling against a pandemic and economic crisis, it's crucial that everyone is able to make their voice heard. The 2020 presidential candidates have weighed in on how they would protect the right to vote.

The 2020 Presidential Candidates and the Right to Vote*

Donald Trump (R) ³	Joe Biden (D)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No explicit position articulated on campaign website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore the Voting Rights Act⁴ • Pass the Voting Rights Advancement Act⁵ • Restore the voting rights of individuals convicted of felonies and have served their sentences • Ensure the Justice Department has the resources and authority to enforce laws protecting voting rights • Ensure the Justice Department challenges state laws suppressing the right to vote⁶ • Supports automatic voter registration and same-day voter registration • End gerrymandering • Protect the vote from foreign interference

*Positions include plans and policy proposals delineated on 2020 candidate websites.

¹ The Guardian (2020, 21 January). [Which US States Makes it Harder to Vote?](#)

² Brennan Center (2020, January 16). [The New Voter Suppression](#)

³ Trump (2020). [Trump Campaign Announces President Trump's 2nd Term Agenda: Fighting for You!](#)

⁴ Biden (2020). [The Power of America's Example: The Biden Plan for Leading the Democratic World to Meet the Challenges of the 21st Century](#)

⁵ Biden (2020). [Lift Every Voice: The Biden Plan for Black America](#)

⁶ Biden (2020). [Joe Biden's Agenda for the AAPI Community](#)