

While we wait...

Drop your name and what League you're representing in the chat!

LWVUS Advocacy Team Presents:

2025 Legislative Trends

October 16th, 2025



Legislative Trends 2025



Presenters



Brady Horine

Legislative and Policy Coordinator

bhorine@lww.org

Housekeeping

- All trainings will be recorded to keep accurate notes to share with attendees and others after the call.
- If you are not speaking, please mute yourself to minimize sound issues.
- Make sure you identify yourself (name, League, State & pronouns) when asking questions
- **Staff will be monitoring the chat box.** If you have any questions or thoughts throughout the call, please feel free to drop them in the chat box.

Agenda

Housekeeping

Expansions of Democracy

Anti-Democratic Restrictions

Urgent Issue Trends

Audience Questions

Community Norms



Bring your full self and limit distractions



What is learned here, leaves here



No one knows everything, together we know a lot



Don't yuck my yum



Oops, ouch, and educate



Assume best intentions

POLL!

How much do you know about state-level democracy legislation in states other than your own?

Our Current Moment

Anti-democratic efforts are intensifying from the federal government to the state level.



“Laboratories of Democracy”

- States have been called “laboratories of democracy”
- They can also be laboratories of authoritarianism
- This year, we have seen both



Legislative Trends 2025

What is Legislative Trends?

- Annual report of state-level democracy trends
- Compiled from thousands of tracked bills
- Covers democracy expansions, anti-democratic restrictions, and urgent issues
- Available of League Management Site

Making Democracy Work

- Beginning in 2016 and expanded since, the League of Women Voters launched the League-wide Campaign for Making Democracy Work®.
- The campaign focuses on Voting Rights, Improving Elections, Money in Politics, Redistricting, and Election of the President by Popular Vote.



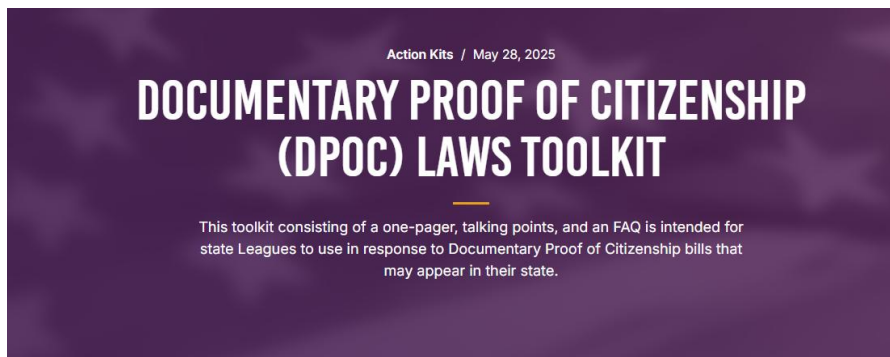
Restrictions, overview

Documentary Proof of Citizenship (DPOC)

Texas SB 16

- A state-level SAVE Act, for all intents and purposes.
- Requires documentary proof of citizenship for voter registration, creating additional barriers for eligible residents.
- Failed to meet a key deadline and thus did not pass.

DPOC Toolkit



Toolkit Table of Contents:

1. Why Documentary Proof of Citizenship laws are harmful
2. How you can respond
3. Template testimony and letter to the editor
4. Frequently asked questions
5. Talking points

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EAC Comments Action Alert

- The Election Assistance Commission (EAC) put out a federal register notice requesting comments on a petition to add documentary proof of citizenship (DPOC) to the federal voter registration form.
- We're encouraging Leagues to fill out our Action Alert to make our voices heard.
- Reach out to advocacy@lww.org for any assistance or questions.
- **DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS IS ON MONDAY!**

Restrictive Voter Registration Changes

South Dakota HB 1066

- Requires voters to have lived in the same permanent dwelling for 30 consecutive days to be eligible to vote.
- The bill targets voters who are state residents, but may be living and traveling in an RV, or those with frequently changing addresses for financial reasons, for example.

Direct Democracy Restrictions

The Assault on Democracy in Arkansas

- **Act 153 of 2025 (formerly HB 1221):** Requires the Attorney General to approve the ballot measure title and popular name of an initiative before circulation. This adds a new layer of bureaucratic oversight, potentially delaying or obstructing citizen-led efforts.
- **Act 154 of 2025 (formerly HB 1222):** Prohibits sponsors from submitting more than one conflicting petition simultaneously. This limits strategic options for advocacy groups like the League, who are seeking to address complex issues through multiple proposals.
- **Act 218 of 2025 (formerly SB 207):** Imposes stricter regulations on paid petition circulators, including mandatory registration and training requirements. This act also requires canvassers to tell potential signers that "petition fraud is a criminal offense." This increases the administrative burden on campaigns and may deter participation.
- **Act 240 of 2025 (formerly SB 208):** Introduces new penalties for petition circulators who violate state laws, including potential misdemeanor charges and requires canvassers to view the signers' ID before they can sign. This creates a chilling effect on volunteer participation in the initiative process, in addition to needlessly complicating it.
- **Act 241 of 2025 (formerly SB 211):** Requires that petition signers read the full ballot title in the presence of a circulator. This stipulation needlessly complicates the signature-gathering process and may reduce the number of valid signatures collected.

Direct Democracy Toolkit

Direct Democracy Toolkit

Action Kits / August 22, 2025

DIRECT DEMOCRACY TOOLKIT

Across the country, state legislatures are advancing bills that limit citizen access to ballot initiatives, constitutional amendments, and citizen referendums. These efforts are meant to restrict one of the most accessible and truly democratic tools available to voters when politicians fail to act.

Across the country, state legislatures are advancing bills that limit citizen access to ballot initiatives, constitutional amendments, and citizen referendums. These efforts are meant to restrict one of the most accessible and truly democratic tools available to voters when politicians fail to act. The result of eroding these tools is a quieter, narrower, and less participatory democracy.

Restrictions on Absentee and Mail Voting

Utah HB 300

- Bans unsolicited mail ballot applications
- Requires annual absentee ballot applications
- Limits drop box access despite Utah's long-standing vote-by-mail system.
- Prior to this legislation, Utah automatically sent all active registered voters ballots through the mail.

Ranked Choice Voting Restrictions

West Virginia SB 490

- Bans ranked choice voting in all state, county, and local elections, preempting local ordinances
- Five bills in West Virginia were introduced to prohibit ranked choice voting, despite it never being used in the state.
- Current Governor, in the primary, got 33% of the vote in a field of 6 with 30% turnout. He was elected with 9% of the vote.

Mid-Cycle Redistricting

Current State(s) of Redistricting

- Texas (5 new likely-R seats)
- California (5 new likely-D seats, if approved by voters)
- Missouri (1 new likely-R seat)
- Florida (Select Committee created)
- Utah (2 new likely-R seats, if approved by Governor)

The entity responsible for redistricting per state are:

- **Independent commission:** California and Arizona
- **Bipartisan commission:** Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Jersey, New York, Washington
- **Hybrid system:** Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Missouri, Ohio
- **A nonpartisan governmental agency:** Iowa
- **Legislature:** the other 34 states

Action Kits / August 22, 2025

MID-CYCLE REDISTRICTING TOOLKIT

This page is your one-stop-shop for tools and resources--including templates, messaging guidance, and background materials--related to the League's work on mid-cycle redistricting.

In 2025, many states' maps are being redrawn mid-cycle without a new Census for blatant partisan advantage rather than to reflect real shifts in population. This practice breaks trust with voters, undermines fair representation, and disrupts the stability of our elections.

Mid-decade redistricting is the process of redrawing electoral maps *between* the regular ten-year redistricting cycles that follow the US Census. The US Constitution sets redistricting after the decennial Census to ensure maps reflect population changes.

TOOLKIT RESOURCES

1. [Letter to the Editor Template](#) | This template is designed for individual League members who wish to submit Letters to the Editor in their personal capacity as members of their local or state League. Before submitting any Letters on behalf of the League, check with your League president or advocacy chair to ensure alignment with your state League's advocacy policies and procedures.
2. [Letter to State Legislators Template](#) | This template is intended for use when a legislator has made public comments in the press, on social media, or in official statements that support or critique redistricting outside of the once-per-decade cycle.
3. [Testimony Template](#) | This template is designed for individual League members who are testifying in their personal capacity as members of their local or state League.
4. [Mid-Cycle Redistricting Talking Points](#) | State Leagues (and LWVUS) should be the leaders on public messaging around mid-cycle redistricting. Local Leagues can use these talking points internally with their members or community partners.

Expansive Changes

State Voting Rights Acts

Colorado Voting Rights Act (COVRA)

- Strengthens federal protections
- Expands equity and representation
- Addresses concerns from disabled voters
- Seeks to overcome language barriers to voting
- Creates a strong legal framework for courts

Direct Democracy Expansion

Michigan HR 89

This bill sought to affirm Michigan residents' right to:

- Propose constitutional amendments
- Support the implementation of voter-approved proposals enhancing voting rights
- Oppose federal actions that could undermine those rights.

Democracy Restoration

Tennessee SB 1353

- Restores the right to vote for individuals with past felony convictions upon completion of their sentence, including parole and probation, streamlining the restoration process and removing prior barriers related to financial obligations or paperwork

Expanding Voter Assistance

Maryland HB 983

- This law establishes a statewide Language Assistance Program, requiring the State Board of Elections to identify counties with significant limited-English populations and to provide translated materials, video-conference interpreters, signage, and bilingual poll workers at early voting locations and Election Day sites.
- Originally part of a Maryland Voting Rights Act package.

Urgent Issues

Attacks on LGBTQ+ Communities

Texas SB 1188

- Requires health care records to list assigned sex at birth and prohibits updates to gender markers except for clerical corrections.
- Patients, providers, and insurance companies face civil penalties for non-compliance.
- This addresses a non-existent problem and discriminates against transgender and intersex Texans.

Attacks on immigrant communities

Georgia HB 1105

- Also known as the “Georgia Criminal Alien Track and Report Act”
- Bars sheriffs from using discretion in immigration-related arrest
- Requires them to honor ICE detainers as de facto warrants
- Mandates reporting and funding cuts for counties refusing to comply.
- Discretion and local control are removed from officers and officials.

New materials coming soon!

A list of updated resources from our immigration partners and more are coming soon.

Attacks on reproductive rights

Tennessee HB 26

- Criminalize the mailing of FDA-approved abortion medications
- Impose excessive fines on providers up to \$5 million
- Undermines legal protections for doctors
- Expands government surveillance of reproductive healthcare

Repro toolkit coming soon!

What other issues would you like us to make toolkits for?

Conclusion

Questions