True the Vote

Securing the Future of U.S. Elections: A Ten-Point Plan to Rebuild Trust and Protect Liberty in Our Electoral System

The Way Forward

Introduction

America stands at a crossroads in securing the integrity of its elections. Across the nation, voters overwhelmingly recognize the need for change, with widespread agreement on common-sense measures to ensure fairness and transparency. Yet, efforts to address these concerns are often derailed not by a lack of solutions but by the incendiary debates and mistrust that dominate the issue. Investigating fraud is costly and invites intense backlash, while a lack of commitment to transparency and accountability continues to undermine progress. Many officials, wary of political fallout, avoid pursuing necessary reforms, leaving innovation stalled and public trust eroding.

Safeguarding election integrity is not about empowering the state but the individual, ensuring every citizen's voice is heard through a secure and transparent system. Only by depoliticizing the issue and uniting around fairness, accountability, and individual freedom can we achieve the progress Americans demand.

To address these concerns, True the Vote presents a ten-point plan focused on transparency, accuracy, and broad participation. Rooted in a pro-liberty philosophy, it balances voter rights, state sovereignty, and national interests to strengthen our elections. This effort requires courage and commitment. Achieving reform will depend on a nationwide dialogue—one America is eager to have. And so, we begin.

Summary of Top Ten Election Reforms

1. Provide an American Voter ID (AVID): To address both the security concerns surrounding voter identification and the widespread desire for personal privacy and state sovereignty, we propose a decentralized, state-led approach to voter ID verification. This would involve a new form of photo voter ID managed by individual states and underpinned by distributed ledger technology.

2. Clean Voter Rolls: To safeguard election integrity, we propose a comprehensive strategy for regular and rigorous maintenance of voter rolls, incorporating state-of-the-art data management practices and enhanced collaboration between state and federal agencies.

3. Secure Paper Ballots and Enhance Polling Infrastructure: To strengthen election security and public trust, we advocate for secure, verifiable paper ballots paired with robust polling infrastructure.

4. Create Transparent Ballot Tabulation Processes: To strengthen public trust in election outcomes, we support real-time public access to ballot tallies and transparent processes for ballot reconciliation are essential.

5. Eliminate Ballot Drop Boxes: We advocate for eliminating unsupervised ballot drop boxes to enhance election security by addressing potential vulnerabilities and reducing opportunities for tampering or unauthorized access.

6. Reduce Mail Ballots: To increase election security and reduce the risk of ballot harvesting, we support limiting mail-in voting to exceptional cases, such as for military personnel, overseas citizens, and individuals with disabilities or other special needs.

7. Establish a National Voter Information Campaign forVoters' Rights and Election Integrity: In order for any of these ten points to be effectively implemented, we must educate American voters on their rights, voting procedures, and the importance of election integrity while strengthening mechanisms to detect, report, and penalize electoral fraud. This will increase public confidence in the electoral process.

8. Ensure Equal Access to Election Data: To promote accountability and trust in the electoral process, a framework for equal access to election data must be established. This plan ensures that all organizations, including public entities and independent auditors, have transparent, consistent, and fair access to election data.

9. Update and Enforce Federal Election Standards: To establish reliable, efficient, and transparent election processes, key federal election standards—including the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) protocols—should be revised and modernized to reflect best practices, many of which can be found in private industry.

10. Develop "Right to Try" Legislation for Election Innovation: We propose a novel legislative approach to safeguard election innovation. The "Right to Try" legislative framework for election technology aims to foster innovation and competition among election service vendors while reducing the risk of politically motivated litigation.

Feedback, edits, additions? Please share! Together, let's make this a roadmap for election integrity in the days ahead!

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REFORM: VOTER ID

1. Provide an American Voter ID (AVID)

To address both the security concerns surrounding voter identification and the widespread desire for individual privacy and state sovereignty, we propose a decentralized, state-led approach to voter ID verification. This would involve a form of photo voter ID, managed by individual states and underpinned by distributed ledger technology—similar to blockchain. Unlike a national digital ID, this system prioritizes privacy, state oversight, and voter rights by decentralizing control, accommodating interstate portability, and ensuring secure verification without a central national authority.

Objective

Implement a photo voter ID system that respects national security needs, reinforces state sovereignty, and protects individual liberties. Leveraging a distributed ledger, this approach ensures secure and verifiable identification that prevents fraud without compromising privacy or concentrating power in a national ID database. Each state would manage its data independently, maintaining authority over its election processes while enhancing security standards nationwide.

Why is Reform Necessary?

The absence of voter identification prevents the confirmation of voter identity. Without ensuring that only registered voters cast ballots, the integrity of election outcomes may be called into question.

As of October 2024, only 35 states required voters to show some form of identification to vote at the polls on Election Day, though many allowed exceptions. Among these, only 25 states specifically required photo identification. 15 states did not require voters to present any form of identification to cast their ballot at the polls.

These unnecessary inconsistencies are a perpetual source of confusion for voters and fodder for fraud and litigation.

In fact, the United States is the only industrialized country that doesn't use some form of standardized voter identification.

According to 2014 GAO estimates, between 5 - 16% of registered voters did not have some form of identification. Every state has programs available to support the provision of identification to any American citizen who desires to have identification. Given that identification is broadly required for many different purposes and pursuits, from cashing a check to applying for government assistance, what reason could there be not to ensure every American has adequate identification, not just to vote but to function in society?

Public Support

Recent polling data supports the demand for secure, transparent elections. A Gallup poll conducted in October 2024 shows that 84% of Americans support photo voter ID requirements, illustrating broad, bipartisan support. This consensus suggests that a well-designed voter ID system could have wide public acceptance if it prioritizes privacy, accountability, and state management.

Implementation Timeframe: 18-36 months

- **Phase 1 (6-12 months):** Develop partnerships with private-sector technology providers (e.g., ID.me, CLEAR) and create legislative frameworks for decentralized ID systems at the state level.
- **Phase 2 (12-18 months):** Pilot the AVID system in select states, testing distributed ledger technology for verification.
- **Phase 3 (12-18 months):** Roll out the system nationwide with state-specific implementations and public education campaigns.
- **Budget Notes:** Includes costs for technology development, training election officials, public awareness campaigns, and issuing IDs.

Key Reform Considerations

Learning from Private Industry—Key Technology Players: Several technology companies specialize in data management for identity, residency, and citizenship verification, with state-managed, privacy-focused election security capabilities. Examples of potential collaborators include:

- ID.me: A robust verification platform used by federal and state agencies, employing biometric data and knowledge-based authentication. ID.me's decentralized framework aligns with state sovereignty, providing verification without centralized data control.
- CLEAR: Known for biometric verification, CLEAR has a distributed model of secure entry in airports and event venues. Its technology could offer states a modular way to verify voter identities with minimal data sharing.
- LexisNexis Risk Solutions: Offers identity verification and fraud prevention via real-time data analytics from public records, credit histories, and more. This system's flexibility allows for state-specific configurations, maintaining control within each jurisdiction.

- Equifax and Experian: Offer additional options for verifying identity using AI and real-time data from credit reports and government records, with configurable tools for state-level use.

Note: We are not endorsing biometric solutions, however we can learn from them. All available options should be considered as we work towards optimized solutions.

Plan for Developing and Implementing American Voter ID (AVID)

To develop and implement the American Voter ID (AVID) system, we propose a decentralized, state-led approach to create a secure photo voter ID card. This card would serve as a reliable, privacy-focused form of voter identification, issued and managed independently by each state, without a centralized national database. Leveraging distributed ledger technology for verification, AVID ensures the security and authenticity of each ID card while preserving state sovereignty and protecting individual privacy.

- **Phase 1: Strategic Partnerships and Technological Foundation**

  The initial development phase will focus on partnering with technology providers specializing in secure, decentralized identity verification to support the issuance of photo voter ID cards. Potential collaborators include ID.me, CLEAR, LexisNexis Risk Solutions, Equifax, and Experian. These companies bring expertise in biometric and document authentication while ensuring privacy through decentralized methods. AVID will leverage distributed ledger technology not as a central database but as a means to verify the authenticity of each ID hash, allowing states to confirm voter identities securely without sharing private data.

- **Phase 2: State-Level Implementation and Testing**

  After developing the initial AVID infrastructure, selected states will pilot the issuance of AVID photo ID cards. Each state will control the issuance and management of its ID cards, with distributed ledger technology providing a secure method for verifying authenticity and support interstate portability without requiring data to be stored in a federal database. Pilot programs will test card issuance processes, on-the-ground verification during elections, and compliance with state-specific privacy and security requirements. Training will be provided for election officials on how to manage and verify AVID cards while respecting state autonomy.

- **Phase 3: National Rollout and Public Education**

  Upon successful completion of the pilot programs, AVID photo voter ID cards will be implemented nationwide, with each state responsible for managing and issuing cards to eligible voters. A public education campaign will emphasize AVID's benefits for election security and individual autonomy, detailing how voters can obtain an AVID ID and the protections in place to prevent unauthorized access to voter information. The campaign will address security, ease of use, and reinforce the message that AVID strengthens election integrity while honoring state-led oversight and individual voter rights.

Conclusion

Our proposed AVID system would respect the balance between national interests and individual rights. By adopting state-managed, distributed ledger technology, we can ensure secure, accessible, portable, and accurate voter verification, strengthening election integrity while honoring the values of privacy, state autonomy, and individual liberty.

Feedback, edits, additions? Please share! Together, let's make this a roadmap for election integrity in the days ahead!

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REFORM: VOTER ROLLS

2. Clean Voter Rolls

Objective

To safeguard election integrity, we propose a comprehensive strategy for systematic and rigorous maintenance of voter rolls, incorporating state-of-the-art data management practices and enhanced collaboration between state and federal agencies. This approach would require modernized standards for verifying that all registered voters are eligible, living, U.S. citizens while removing duplicate or outdated registrations. We also propose reforms to the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) (see point #9) to standardize voter roll maintenance practices nationwide and facilitate access to a centralized federal "data lake" that securely aggregates relevant government data for state voter verification.

Why is Reform Necessary?

Based on True the Vote's review of voter rolls, there are well over 25 million ineligible voter records in state registries nationwide. As of 2022, there were approximately 161 million voters registered nationwide. This means that approximately 16% of our national voter registry is inaccurate - a disparity significant enough to alter almost any election contest.

Clean voter rolls are the gateway to free and fair elections. Here's why they matter:

1. Preventing Voter Fraud - Clean voter rolls help ensure that individuals who are ineligible, such as non-citizens, deceased persons, or those who have moved out of the jurisdiction, cannot vote fraudulently. There have been myriad reports of such activities, many of which have resulted in inaccurate election outcomes. Accuracy is essential.

2. Maintaining Public Confidence - Accurate voter rolls contribute to the perception of fairness and legitimacy in the electoral process. If voters believe the system is secure, they are more likely to trust the outcomes. At present, confidence is eroding.

3. Efficient Election Management - Clean rolls reduce logistical challenges on Election Day, such as verifying voter eligibility, managing long lines, and processing provisional ballots. This leads to smoother operations and faster results. *See page 15 for a breakdown of how long it takes other countries to process votes. For example, China has a population of 1.4 billion people (over 900 million voting citizens) and is able to count votes reliably in 1-2 days time.

4. Preventing Errors - Inaccurate voter rolls may lead to issues like voters being assigned to the wrong district or precinct, or invalid votes being counted, which could result in disenfranchisement or legal disputes over election results.

5. Reducing Costs - Clean voter rolls save resources by eliminating the need to print, process, or manage extra ballots and materials for voters who are no longer eligible. This ensures taxpayer money is spent more efficiently.

6. Ensuring Equal Representation - By maintaining accurate rolls, electoral district boundaries and voter allocations can be drawn more fairly, reflecting actual populations and preventing disproportionate influence.

By keeping voter rolls clean, election officials can uphold the integrity of elections, promote fairness, and bolster public trust in the democratic process.

Public Support

Public support for maintaining accurate voter rolls is strong, as evidenced by a 2021 Pew Research Center survey, which found that 88% of Americans believe it is important to prevent ineligible individuals from voting.

Implementation Timeframe: 12-24 months

- Phase 1 (6-12 months): Pass legislative reforms to the NVRA to standardize voter roll maintenance practices and develop the federal "data lake."
- Phase 2 (12-18 months): Implement data-sharing protocols with federal agencies (e.g., SSA, AAVA, DHS) and private entities like LexisNexis.
- Phase 3 (6 months): Provide real-time voter registration updates at the state level.
- Budget Notes: Funding includes infrastructure for secure data-sharing systems, training for state officials, and audits to ensure compliance.

Key Reform Considerations

ENHANCING DATA ACCESS AND CROSS-AGENCY VERIFICATION

To verify voter eligibility accurately and efficiently, states can partner with federal agencies, gaining timely access to data that confirms each voter's identity, citizenship, and residency status. Key examples include:

1. Social Security Administration (SSA): The SSA's Death Master File (DMF) would help states identify and remove deceased individuals from voter rolls, minimizing the risk of fraudulent votes cast in the names of deceased persons.

2. Department of Homeland Security (DHS): Through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), DHS databases can be sourced by states to confirm citizenship status prior to registration.

3. National Change of Address (NCOA): Managed by the United States Postal Service (USPS), the NCOA database enables states to track address changes and keep voter records current, reducing the likelihood of duplicate registrations across jurisdictions.

4. American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) : The AAMVA's national database can play a significant role in maintaining accurate voter rolls by leveraging its comprehensive information on motor vehicle records and identity verification.

To bolster these resources, a federal data lake should be created to compile real-time, vetted information from numerous government sources. States would then have a reliable, streamlined source for critical verification data. This data lake would provide states with near-instant access to verified information, allowing them to maintain cleaner, more accurate voter rolls without relying on potentially outdated or siloed systems.

INCORPORATING PRIVATE INDUSTRY STANDARDS IN PII MANAGEMENT

In addition to government sources, voter roll maintenance could benefit from adopting best practices from private industry, which has set the standard for securely managing personally identifiable information (PII). Companies like ID.me and CLEAR have developed rigorous protocols for identity verification, including biometric authentication and document verification. Their methods offer secure and scalable ways to verify identities in real-time, protecting user privacy while ensuring that only valid accounts (or in this case, voter registrations) remain active. Similarly, LexisNexis has experience using public records and advanced data analytics to verify identities while protecting personal information.

These private industry leaders demonstrate that accurate and secure identity verification is possible at scale. By drawing on their expertise, states could adopt robust privacy practices and data security measures, ensuring voter data remains safe while promoting voter roll accuracy.

REFORMING THE NVRA FOR STANDARDIZED VOTER ROLL MAINTENANCE

Reforming the NVRA to create standardized, federally guided practices for voter roll maintenance is essential. This would include establishing clear, uniform deadlines for verifying and updating voter records in the lead-up to elections. Implementing such deadlines would ensure that voter rolls are as accurate as possible before an election, reducing confusion and the potential for ineligible voters.

Simultaneously, real-time registration options could be available for voters, enabling states to confirm voter eligibility up to Election Day using data that verifies identity, residency, and citizenship. This balanced approach—having both a pre-election "freeze" deadline and real-time updates based on authoritative data sources—allows flexibility for eligible voters without sacrificing election security.

EVALUATING INTEGRITY OF ALL INCOMING DATA CHANNELS

Evaluating the integrity of all incoming data channels is essential to ensure voter registration accuracy and safeguard the electoral process. The lack of consistent data management standards, both at the state level and within federal government agencies submitting registrations, further exacerbates the problem by allowing discrepancies and inaccuracies to proliferate unchecked.

Federal postcard registrations and UOCAVA (Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act) provisions, while essential for enabling voting access for military personnel and citizens abroad, introduce vulnerabilities through unregulated overseas registrations. These channels often bypass stringent verification processes, creating potential gaps in the accuracy of voter rolls.

Compounding this issue is the lack of oversight for NGOs involved in voter registration. Many of these organizations operate without adequate quality controls, leading to inaccuracies and invalid entries being added to voter registries. Without stringent accountability measures, errors or fraudulent registrations can undermine public trust in elections.

By implementing robust verification mechanisms, enforcing consistent standards, and auditing data sources—including those from NGOs—we can address these challenges. Transparent oversight and cross-referencing across state and federal systems are critical to ensuring accuracy.

Conclusion

By embracing standardized, transparent practices and leveraging modern technology, voter roll maintenance can evolve to be both highly accurate and secure. Collaboration between state and federal agencies, reformed NVRA guidelines, and the adoption of best practices from private industry for PII management would collectively ensure that only eligible U.S. citizens can participate in our elections, reinforcing the integrity and reliability of the electoral process.

Feedback, edits, additions? Please share! Together, let's make this a roadmap for election integrity in the days ahead!

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REFORM: PAPER BALLOTS

3. Secure Paper Ballots and Enhance Polling Infrastructure

Objective

To strengthen election security and public trust, we advocate for secure, verifiable, paper ballots paired with robust polling infrastructure. Paper ballots provide a clear audit trail, making tampering easier to detect and offering protection against electronic interference. With well-trained poll workers, secure ballot boxes, and consistent procedures, states can enhance the reliability and transparency of the voting process.

Why is Reform Necessary?

Transitioning from electronic voting machines to paper ballots is advocated for several reasons, particularly concerning election security, transparency, and voter confidence. Here are the key reasons why such a move is necessary:

1. Enhanced Security
    - Risk of Hacking: Electronic voting machines, especially those connected to networks, are vulnerable to cyberattacks that could compromise election results.
    - Software Manipulation: Malicious actors can alter software to tamper with vote totals or undermine the integrity of the process.
    - Mitigating Risks: Paper ballots are not susceptible to digital hacking, providing a secure backup that can't be electronically manipulated.
2. Auditable Results
    - Paper Trail: Secure paper ballots provide a physical record of each vote, allowing election officials to verify electronic tallies through hand counts if needed.

- Recounts and Audits: Transparent audits and recounts are only possible with a verifiable paper trail, which electronic voting machines without a paper component cannot provide.

3. Voter Confidence
    - Perceived Transparency: Paper ballots reassure voters that their choices are recorded and counted accurately, as they can physically see their vote before submission.
    - Trust Issues: Public trust in electronic systems is often lower due to fears of tampering or technical malfunctions.
4. System Resilience
    - Power Outages: Paper ballots are not dependent on electricity or functioning machinery, ensuring voting can continue uninterrupted in emergencies.
    - Equipment Failures: Electronic machines can malfunction, causing delays or invalidating votes if no backup exists. Paper ballots avoid this risk.
5. Preventing Technical Errors
    - Software Bugs: Mistakes in programming or hardware can lead to errors in vote recording and tabulation.
    - Human Oversight: Paper ballots allow for manual checks to detect and correct errors that automated systems might miss.
6. Universal Accessibility
    - Simple to Use: Paper ballots can be easier for voters unfamiliar with technology or those in areas lacking reliable infrastructure.
    - Broader Participation: Reduced reliance on technology can minimize barriers for rural or underserved communities.
7. Cost-Effectiveness
    - Long-Term Savings: While the initial shift to paper ballots may require investment in printing and storage, it avoids the ongoing costs of maintaining and updating electronic voting machines.
8. Global Best Practices
    - International Trends: Many democracies worldwide use paper-based voting systems, citing security and reliability as critical factors.
    - Hybrid Systems: Some countries use electronic machines but maintain paper backups, combining technological efficiency with security.

While electronic voting machines offer advantages such as speed and convenience, a transition to paper ballots emphasizes security, transparency, and trust, addressing many concerns about the integrity of modern elections.

Public Support

Voters value the inherent security features of paper ballots, such as their immunity to hacking, ability to be physically verified, and suitability for post-election audits. While polling data is limited, a 2023 poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that 48% of Americans have high confidence in paper ballots scanned into a machine, and 40% trust paper ballots counted by hand. These confidence

levels are unacceptably low. Emphasizing verifiable paper trails and transparency addresses growing public concerns about election integrity, positioning secure paper ballots as a key solution for boosting trust in the electoral process.

Implementation Timeframe: 24-36 months

- Phase 1 (6-12 months): Secure funding for ballot production and infrastructure.
- Phase 2 (12-18 months): Transition states to paper ballots and implement chain-of-custody protocols.
- Phase 3 (6-12 months): Deploy enhanced polling infrastructure and train poll workers.
- Key Costs: Printing secure ballots, IoT sensors for ballot tracking, polling place upgrades, and training.

Key Reform Considerations

GENERAL SECURITY FEATURES OF PAPER BALLOTS

Paper ballots offer a range of inherent security features, which contribute to voter confidence by minimizing the risk of interference and ensuring transparency:

- Physical Security: Unlike digital systems, paper ballots are immune to remote hacking.
- Voter Verification: Voters can confirm that their choices are correctly recorded before submission, providing immediate feedback on ballot accuracy.
- Chain of Custody: Ballots are secured and transported with strict handling protocols, overseen by bipartisan teams, to prevent tampering en route.
- Auditability: Physical ballots allow for thorough post-election audits, enabling recounts if needed and reinforcing the accuracy of results.
- Transparency in Counting: Observers, including election officials and party representatives, can monitor manual counts, ensuring an open and visible process.
- Independence from Software: Paper ballots eliminate vulnerabilities associated with software issues or malicious code, reducing the risks of technical manipulation.

ADVANCED SECURITY FEATURES FOR PAPER BALLOTS

- Watermarks and Security Paper: Embedded watermarks visible under specific lighting and tamper-resistant paper with embedded fibers or color shifts deter counterfeiting, similar to currency-grade paper.
- Ballot Numbering and Serial Numbers: Serialized ballots and chain-of-custody tracking reduce risks of tampering and enhance transparency from issuance to counting.
- Invisible Inks and UV Light Features: Invisible ink patterns and fluorescent security strips, visible only under UV light, confirm ballot authenticity and prevent duplication.
- Thermochromic and Color-Shift Inks: Heat-sensitive and angle-shifting inks provide quick, reliable methods for verifying ballot authenticity.
- Microprinting and Anti-Copying Patterns: Tiny text and anti-copying patterns protect against unauthorized reproduction, making counterfeits easy to spot.
- Microfiche: Microfiche technology embeds microscopic, verifiable data on each ballot, adding a nearly invisible, tamper-resistant layer of security that's readable only under magnification, enhancing ballot traceability and resistance to duplication

- Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT): VVPAT receipts provide voters with an auditable paper trail, reinforcing transparency and enabling accurate recounts.

IMPROVED POLLING INFRASTRUCTURE

A secure, transparent election process requires enhanced polling infrastructure alongside paper ballots. Robust chain-of-custody protocols, secure storage, and innovative logistics provide models to ensure ballot security and transparency throughout the voting process. Key aspects include:

CHAIN OF CUSTODY, SECURE STORAGE, FINGER INK, AND LIVE-STREAMING

- Tamper-Proof Evidence Bags: Ballots and election materials are stored in tamper-proof bags, sealed with chain-of-custody labels. Access or transfer of these bags requires multiple signatures, maintaining accountability at each step.
- Multi-Signature Security: Each time ballots are accessed or moved, officials sign off, creating a clear, documented trail that can be audited to verify secure handling.
- Real-Time Tracking: Just as customers track packages, election administrators and auditors could access real-time data on ballot movement and location to ensure accountability.
- Transparent and Secure Ballot Boxes: Ballot boxes should be secure, made of strong transparent material and locked for controlled access
- Live Streaming: Video live-streaming of polling place operations should be supported to ensure transparency.
- Finger Ink: To prevent multiple voting, voters' fingers are marked with indelible ink, a practice common in many countries.
- IoT Sensors: Sensors can monitor the location, temperature, and condition of ballot containers, ensuring ballots are kept safe and in optimal conditions.
- Precinct based voting: A return to precinct based voting would allow for a stream-lined experience at the polls, more accountability In the process, and increased standard of excellence.

Conclusion

With these security measures, paper ballots can be made secure, verifiable, and tamper-resistant. Supported by modern polling infrastructure and standardized voter roll practices, these efforts build public confidence, strengthen election security, and uphold the integrity of our electoral processes.

Feedback, edits, additions? Please share! Together, let's make this a roadmap for election integrity in the days ahead!

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4. Create Transparent Ballot Tabulation Processes

Objective

To strengthen public trust in election outcomes, real-time public access to ballot tallies and transparent processes for ballot reconciliation are essential. This approach involves making all tally data accessible to the public as votes are counted, along with clear, systematic reconciliation processes to ensure that all ballots are accounted for. When errors are identified, processes such as ballot curing—where voters are notified of issues with their ballots and given a chance to correct them—should be transparently documented and monitored. Enhanced transparency around counting and reconciliation fosters trust by showing voters exactly how their ballots contribute to the final results.

Why is Reform Necessary?

Reforming the current ballot counting process is driven by concerns about efficiency, security, transparency, and public confidence. Here's why such reform is necessary:

1. Improving Accuracy
    - Human Errors: Manual ballot counting and handling can lead to mistakes, especially in large-scale elections with complex ballots.
    - Technology Limitations: While machines increase speed, malfunctions or misprogramming can result in miscounts.
    - Need for Verification: Clear and auditable processes ensure that errors can be identified and corrected.
2. Enhancing Public Trust
    - Lack of Confidence: Persistent concerns about election integrity highlight the need for processes that are widely perceived as fair and accurate.
    - Transparency: Reform can increase the visibility of counting procedures, giving voters confidence in the process.
3. Addressing Delays
    - Slow Results: In some states, lengthy delays in counting and certifying votes erode trust and leave room for speculation.
    - Streamlining Processes: Reforming how ballots are processed and counted can reduce wait times while maintaining accuracy.
4. Security Concerns
    - Vulnerabilities in Technology: Electronic voting and tabulation systems may be susceptible to hacking or tampering.
    - Paper Backup: Reforms can emphasize the importance of paper trails and audits to ensure results are verifiable and secure.

5. Standardization

    - State Variability: Differences in how states count and verify ballots lead to inconsistencies and confusion.
    - Uniform Procedures: Establishing consistent national or regional standards could improve reliability and fairness.
    - Provisional Ballots, a special type of ballot used during an election when there is uncertainty about a voter's eligibility, have been steadily increasing in number. This is not desirable and should be addressed. Ensuring that provisional ballots are properly adjudicated is essential to maintaining voter confidence and upholding the integrity of elections. Provisional ballots often arise due to correctable issues such as incorrect identification or voters being at the wrong polling location.

6. Securing Mail-In Voting

    - Volume Challenges: The rise in absentee and mail-in voting has strained current systems, necessitating updates to ensure timely processing. Our election system was not originally designed to depend so heavily on mail-in voting. (See Point #6 for more detail). The preferred path to correction involves reducing the overall volume of mail-in ballots.
    - Signature Verification: Signature verification is a very weak checkpoint and should be reevaluated.
    - Deadlines: Established deadlines, to receive and count ballots, must be vigorously enforced.

7. Mitigating Partisan Disputes

    - Conflict Over Rules: Partisan disagreements over ballot counting methods undermine public confidence in elections.
    - Nonpartisan Oversight: Reforms could include transparent, nonpartisan oversight to build trust across the political spectrum.

8. Ensuring Accessibility

    - Equity Concerns: Some current methods may inadvertently disenfranchise certain groups, such as individuals with disabilities or language barriers.
    - Inclusive Systems: Reform can prioritize accessible and equitable voting methods for all eligible voters.

Public Support

Public support for transparent ballot tallies is evident in recent polling data. A 2024 AP-NORC poll found that only about one-quarter of Republicans have strong confidence in the nationwide vote count, compared to three-quarters of Democrats. This disparity highlights a significant portion of the electorate's desire for greater transparency in the vote-counting process to bolster trust in election outcomes. Additionally, the Carter Center has noted increased public calls for electoral transparency, leading many election departments to consider or implement livestreams of their ballot tabulation processes.

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE REFORMS

- Hand Count: Hand counting ballots allows for a fully transparent process, reducing concerns about machine errors or tampering. Observers from all parties can monitor the count, increasing trust in the results.

- Automatic Ballot Scanners with Paper Verification: Balancing speed and accuracy while maintaining a verifiable trail.
- Mandatory Audits: Randomized checks of election results to ensure accuracy.
- Centralized Reporting: Streamlining how results are collected and communicated to prevent misinformation.
- Enforcement and Prosecution: Establish clear mechanisms to enforce election laws and prosecute violations, ensuring accountability and upholding public confidence in the electoral process.

Reforming ballot counting aims to address these concerns, ensuring elections are secure, transparent, and accessible while maintaining public trust in the democratic process.

Implementation Timeframe: 18-24 months

- Phase 1 (6-9 months): Develop uniform standards for real-time tally reporting.
- Phase 2 (9-12 months): Implement live-streaming systems and public portals for ballot reconciliation.
- Phase 3 (6 months): Conduct public audits and refine processes.
- Key Costs: Technology for live-streaming, audit tools, and staff training.

Key Reform Considerations

GLOBAL COMPARATIVES IN BALLOT COUNTING TIMES

Here's a table comparing the most populous countries, their populations, voter counts, and the typical duration for counting ballots and declaring election results based on available data:

Country	Population	Number of Voters	Time to Count Ballots
China	1.4 Billion	900 Million	1-2 days
India	1.4 Billion	900 Million	2-3 days
Indonesia	270 Million	196 Million	1-2 days
Pakistan	240 Million	106 Million	1-2 days
United States	330 Million	168 Million	????

PRIVATE INDUSTRY EXAMPLES

Several industries and international elections offer useful models for efficient, transparent tallying and reconciliation processes:

1. Financial Sector – Real-Time Transaction Monitoring: In banking, real-time transaction monitoring is essential to ensure that each transaction is traceable and verifiable. Financial audits by firms like Deloitte and PWC often involve multidisciplinary teams who evaluate data in real-time and provide transparency to clients and stakeholders. Applying similar standards to election tallies and reconciliation could improve public confidence by ensuring that every ballot is tracked and counted in a verifiable way.

2. Retail Industry – Inventory and Reconciliation Audits: Companies like Amazon and Walmart conduct inventory audits using advanced technology to reconcile stock and identify discrepancies. These companies use data analytics and automation to ensure that each item is accounted for throughout the supply chain. Such practices could translate to ballot reconciliation, where each ballot is carefully tracked and accounted for at every stage of the election process.

3. Transportation and Shipping – Real-Time Tracking and Chain of Custody: FedEx and UPS maintain stringent chain-of-custody practices with real-time tracking, barcode scanning at each touchpoint, and digital signature capture to ensure accountability for every package. Maersk uses blockchain and IoT sensors for tracking shipping containers, allowing transparency and an immutable record of each container's status and condition. These methods could inform election processes, offering robust chain-of-custody management for ballots and ensuring a tamper-proof, transparent record of each ballot's journey.

4. International Election Practices – Open Counting Processes: Many countries have established transparent, real-time counting processes. For example:

    - Germany conducts manual counts at each polling station, and results are reported publicly in real-time as they are counted.
    - Australia live-streams parts of its vote-counting process and encourages public observers, fostering transparency in the tallying process.
    - Canada mandates open-door policies at counting stations, where any member of the public can observe the process, further increasing transparency and accountability.

Process Considerations

TRANSPARENT AUDITS AND REPORTING WITH PUBLIC ACCESS

Audit reports should be accessible online in clear, understandable formats. Metrics should include the accuracy of initial counts, the efficiency of ballot reconciliation, timeframes for curing ballots, and any deviations from standard procedures. Metrics should also highlight areas for improvement, creating a feedback loop for election officials and policymakers to refine procedures for future elections.

BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY – IMMUTABLE AND TRANSPARENT RECORDS

Blockchain technology could offer a secure and transparent solution for administering election processes. Similar to its use in cryptocurrency and supply chain management, blockchain creates an immutable ledger where each transaction—or in this case, each ballot—is recorded in a decentralized, tamper-proof system. Blockchain's ability to provide real-time updates while maintaining voter anonymity makes it a strong candidate for securing voter registration databases, tracking ballots, and verifying results. By leveraging smart contracts, election officials could automate processes like voter eligibility verification and vote tallying, reducing human error and increasing efficiency. Blockchain's distributed nature also protects against cyberattacks, ensuring the integrity of the election process. Incorporating blockchain principles into election administration would enhance transparency and trust, ensuring that every vote is securely and accurately recorded.

DEVELOPING A TEMPLATE FOR PROCESS EXCELLENCE

By reviewing and documenting all stages of the election process—such as ballot handling, reconciliation, curing, and audit transparency—auditors could establish a template of best practices. This template would serve as a benchmark for future elections, helping to standardize procedures, enhance efficiency, and provide guidance on managing ballots securely and transparently. This could also aid in identifying common deviations from standard practices and we can address them proactively.

Conclusion

Implementing real-time, publicly accessible ballot tallies, immutable and transparent records, comprehensive audits, and a multidisciplinary approach, election authorities can enhance transparency and account-

ability in the election process. Drawing on successful models from private industry and international election practices, these improvements would create a more secure, credible voting system and help to build public confidence in election results.

Feedback, edits, additions? Please share! Together, let's make this a roadmap for election integrity in the days ahead!

SHARE FEEDBACK

REFORM: DROP BOXES

5. Eliminate Ballot Drop Boxes

Objective

Eliminating unsupervised ballot drop boxes enhances election security by addressing vulnerabilities and reducing opportunities for tampering or unauthorized access. Unattended drop boxes, often left in public spaces, lack adequate oversight, making it challenging to ensure ballots are secure from interference, whether intentional or accidental. Eliminating ballot drop boxes and transitioning to supervised drop-off locations and encouraging secure in-person voting provides a common-sense approach that prioritizes the integrity of each vote while still offering convenience and accessibility to voters.

Public Support

Ensuring the security of the voting process is a fundamental concern for the American public. A Pew Research Center survey conducted in October 2018 revealed that only 8% of Americans were "very confident" that U.S. election systems are secure.

Why is Reform Necessary?

During the COVID pandemic, ballot drop boxes were introduced as an alternative to traditional polling places. Because they are often located outdoors, and left open 24 hours a day, the ability to actively monitor these polling places is limited, often altogether absent. In a study conducted by True the Vote in 2021, geospatial data revealed alarming patterns of exploitation, suggesting that certain individuals were engaging in ballot harvesting/trafficking and using ballot drop boxes as their drop off point. Unfortunately, hyperpartisan representatives prevented the evaluation of this research. This in itself, the politicization of process, should be rigorously defended against, so that citizens have a trustworthy forum to which they can present their opinions and concerns without fear of retribution.

Removal of ballot drop boxes hinges on the principles of personal accountability, equal protection under the law, and securing the integrity of the voting process to ensure individual freedoms are not undermined by potential abuses:

1. Promoting Accountability in Voting

    - Direct Responsibility: Casting a ballot in person emphasizes personal accountability in the electoral process. Removing drop boxes reduces the risk of ballots being mishandled, misplaced, or tampered with due to unsupervised collection points.
    - Eliminating Ambiguity: Ensuring that ballots are delivered directly to election offices or polling places minimizes concerns about who is responsible for safeguarding the ballots.

2. Equal Access and Fairness

    - Geographic Inequality: Drop boxes are unevenly distributed, creating disparities between urban and rural voters. Additionally, many drop boxes are placed in locations of high crime traffic and unsafe areas. Removing them ensures that all voters use the same secure methods.
    - Uniform Standards: Without drop boxes, all voters are subject to the same rules, reducing potential claims of preferential treatment or unequal opportunities.

3. Reducing Opportunities for Fraud

    - Minimizing Vulnerabilities: Drop boxes can be seen as a point of vulnerability where ballots may be stolen, tampered with, or exploited by harvesting/trafficking operations. Removing them reduces the avenues for potential fraud, which could undermine the integrity of elections.
    - Protecting Voter Confidence: Ensuring that every vote is securely cast and counted strengthens public trust in the electoral process, which is vital for maintaining individual liberties tied to fair elections.

4. Safeguarding Election Integrity

    - Simplifying Oversight: Fewer voting methods make it easier to monitor and audit the process. Eliminating drop boxes reduces the logistical complexity of securing multiple collection points.
    - Streamlining Processes: With fewer mechanisms in place, election officials can focus resources on ensuring mail and in-person voting are conducted securely and efficiently.

Implementation Timeframe: 9-15 months

- Phase 1 (6-9 months): Pass legislation to phase out drop boxes.
- Phase 2 (3-6 months): Remove ballot drop boxes.
- Key Costs: Removal and disposal of ballot dropboxes.

Key Reform Considerations

SECURITY CONCERNS WITH UNSUPERVISED DROP BOXES

1. Vulnerability to Tampering: Unsupervised drop boxes are often situated in outdoor or public areas with minimal or no surveillance, leaving them vulnerable to tampering. While many drop boxes are designed to be tamper-resistant, they are still exposed to unauthorized access, damage, or ballot removal. Without round-the-clock supervision, it's difficult to ensure the safety of ballots deposited in these boxes.

2. Potential for Ballot Harvesting/Trafficking: Unsupervised drop boxes may inadvertently facilitate ballot harvesting/trafficking, where third parties collect and submit multiple ballots on behalf of voters. While some jurisdictions allow ballot collection with restrictions, this practice can lead to concerns about voter coercion, loss of ballot integrity, or mishandling.

3. Chain-of-Custody Challenges: Effective chain-of-custody protocols require that every ballot's journey from the voter to the counting location is secure and documented. Unsupervised drop boxes complicate this process, as ballots may be handled multiple times by unverified individuals, breaking the chain of custody. Without supervision, it is harder to guarantee that each ballot remains secure from the moment it is cast until it reaches the counting center.

4. Risk of Damage or Interference: Incidents of vandalism can compromise ballots placed in unsupervised drop boxes. Damage to ballots can lead to spoiled votes, delays in counting, or costly interventions to resolve issues. Secure in-person voting locations ensure that ballots are stored in controlled environments, reducing these risks.

COMMON-SENSE SOLUTIONS: SECURE IN-PERSON VOTING AND SUPERVISED DROP-OFF LOCATIONS

Replacing unsupervised drop boxes with secure alternatives doesn't mean sacrificing convenience. Voters still benefit from accessible options to cast ballots safely and securely:

1. Supervised Drop-Off Locations: Designated drop-off locations can be closely monitored by election staff or volunteers trained in chain-of-custody and security protocols. Supervision ensures that ballots are deposited securely and provides an immediate point of contact if voters have questions or encounter issues.

2. Expanded Number of Polling Places: Increasing the number of polling places provides voters with more convenient, accessible locations to cast their ballots, reducing crowding and wait times while enhancing overall security. By adding more polling sites, election officials can distribute voter traffic more evenly, especially in densely populated areas, reducing congestion and minimizing long lines. This approach not only makes voting easier but also ensures that voters can cast their ballots in supervised, secure environments.

3. 24/7 Video Surveillance and Real-Time Monitoring: In cases where drop-off options are essential, 24/7 video surveillance and real-time monitoring should be mandatory. Using cameras and sensor-triggered alerts, election officials can observe and respond to any unusual activity, ensuring ballots remain secure. Posting clear signs about surveillance can deter tampering, while real-time monitoring provides a rapid response option if interference is detected.

4. Digital Check-In and Chain of Custody Logs: Implementing digital check-in systems at supervised drop-off locations can enhance security by recording when and where each ballot was received. These logs create a digital trail that can be cross-referenced during reconciliation, enhancing transparency and minimizing opportunities for mishandling.

BENEFITS OF SECURE VOTING ALTERNATIVES

- Enhanced Transparency and Public Confidence: By removing unsupervised drop boxes and transitioning to supervised, secure alternatives, election officials signal a commitment to protecting each vote's integrity. Transparency in the ballot-handling process strengthens public confidence and reassures voters that their ballots are secure from submission to counting.
- Improved Chain of Custody: Supervised locations and real-time monitoring ensure a clear chain of custody, reducing the risk of ballots being misplaced, mishandled, or tampered with. This enhances the overall security of the election process, particularly with increased use of mail-in and absentee voting.
- Accountability and Rapid Issue Resolution: Staffed locations provide immediate support for voters, reducing the likelihood of errors or confusion. Trained staff can handle ballot issues on-site, ensuring voters have a smooth experience and that each ballot is correctly processed.

Conclusion

By adopting secure, supervised ballot submission methods, election authorities can create a voting environment that prioritizes both accessibility and security, maintaining the integrity of the democratic process while addressing concerns related to unsupervised drop boxes.

Feedback, edits, additions? Please share! Together, let's make this a roadmap for election integrity in the days ahead!

SHARE FEEDBACK

REFORM: MAIL BALLOTS

6. Reduce Mail Ballots

Objective

To increase election security and reduce the risk of ballot harvesting, mail-in voting should be limited to exceptional cases, such as for military personnel, overseas citizens, and individuals with disabilities or other special needs. This targeted approach ensures that remote voting options remain available for those who genuinely require them while prioritizing in-person voting for the majority, where ballots are cast in supervised, secure environments. Restricting mail ballots to specific cases reduces the opportunities for misuse and strengthens the overall integrity of the voting process.

Why is Reform Necessary?

Reducing mail-in ballots is necessary to protect individual freedoms, ensure election integrity, and uphold the principles of accountability and transparency in the electoral process. Here are the key reasons:

1. Preserving Election Integrity
    - Minimizing Fraud Risks: Mail-in ballots introduce potential vulnerabilities, such as lost ballots, misdelivery, or fraud (e.g., ballot harvesting/trafficking). These risks can undermine the integrity of the election and the trust that individual citizens place in the system.
    - Ensuring Equal Votes: Ensuring every vote is legitimate and secure protects the equal value of each individual's vote, a cornerstone of a Constitutional republic's freedom.
2. Promoting Accountability
    - Direct Participation: Voting in person requires individuals to actively engage in the electoral process, ensuring they alone are responsible for casting their vote. This reduces the possibility of third-party influence, such as coercion or ballot tampering.

- Eliminating Intermediaries: By limiting mail-in voting, the direct chain of custody for ballots is better maintained, ensuring greater accountability at every step of the process.

3. Enhancing Transparency
    - Observed Voting: In-person voting allows for bipartisan observers to monitor the process, ensuring that it is transparent and fair. Mail-in ballots, processed away from public scrutiny, may raise concerns about opacity and errors.
    - Auditability: Physical oversight at polling locations allows for immediate verification and reduces the complexity of auditing ballots submitted through less transparent mail systems.
4. Ensuring Election Uniformity
    - Preventing Unequal Standards: Mail-in voting processes vary significantly across states and jurisdictions, creating potential disparities in how votes are verified and counted. Reducing reliance on mail-in ballots promotes a more uniform and equitable system.
    - Equal Voting Conditions: When all voters are encouraged to use the same secure, in-person methods, the voting process becomes fairer and less open to inconsistent application of rules.
5. Strengthening Voter Confidence
    - Reducing Disputes: Mail-in ballots have historically been a source of controversy in close elections, with disputes over delivery, validity, and deadlines. Reducing reliance on mail-in voting can help restore trust in election outcomes.
    - Avoiding Delays: Prolonged vote counting due to late-arriving mail-in ballots can erode confidence in timely and decisive election results.
6. Limiting Potential for Coercion
    - Protecting Voting Privacy: Mail-in ballots may be completed in non-private settings, leaving voters vulnerable to coercion by employers, family members, or others. In-person voting ensures that every individual has the opportunity to vote freely and privately.
    - Discouraging Ballot Harvesting/Trafficking: Mail-in ballots can enable third-party collection practices, which may involve undue influence or even fraudulent submission of ballots.
7. Encouraging Civic Engagement
    - Reinforcing the Voting Tradition: In-person voting fosters a sense of shared civic duty, as individuals actively participate in the process. This engagement strengthens pro-liberty values and reminds voters of their role in shaping governance.
8. Avoiding Reliance on Government Systems
    - Postal Service Dependence: Relying heavily on mail-in voting places a critical civic function in the hands of a government-run system that may face delays or inefficiencies. Reducing mail-in ballots minimizes this dependency, ensuring elections are more resilient and self-reliant.

Public Support

A 2021 Gallup poll found that 40% of Americans were concerned about the potential for voter fraud associated with mail-in voting, reflecting broader apprehensions about its security. These findings underscore the need for measures to enhance the security and public trust in mail-in voting processes.

Implementation Timeframe: 18-24 months

- Phase 1 (6-9 months): Legislative reform to limit mail-in voting to exceptional cases.
- Phase 2 (9-15 months): Implement secure verification and chain-of-custody protocols for mail ballots.
- Key Costs: Technology for voter verification and secure mail handling.

Key Reform Considerations

SECURITY CONCERNS WITH MAIL-IN VOTING

Mail-in voting is widely acknowledged as one of the least secure methods of casting ballots due to several vulnerabilities that are difficult to control remotely. This method is more susceptible to fraud, coercion, and mismanagement, especially without strict chain-of-custody protocols or secure oversight mechanisms.

1. Ballot Harvesting/Trafficking and Fraud: Mail-in voting opens opportunities for third-party ballot collection, often referred to as ballot harvesting or trafficking. Without rigorous oversight, individuals or groups could collect and submit ballots on behalf of others, increasing risks of vote tampering or misrepresentation. The Carter Center has noted that uncontrolled ballot collection can lead to fraud, as seen in several high-profile cases internationally.

2. Chain of Custody Issues: Ensuring a secure chain of custody is difficult with mail-in ballots. Unlike in-person voting, where ballots go directly from the voter's hand to a secure ballot box, mail-in ballots pass through multiple hands—postal workers, election staff, and potentially third parties. This multi-step journey introduces risks of loss, tampering, or misplacement. The Carter Center emphasizes that without clear, enforceable chain-of-custody protocols, mail-in ballots remain vulnerable to breaches in security.

3. Increased Risk of Coercion: Mail-in voting occurs outside the controlled environment of a polling place, where voters may be subjected to undue influence or pressure. The privacy and freedom of the voting booth are difficult to replicate remotely, making it harder to ensure that voters are making independent choices. The Carter Center has cited examples where absentee and mail-in ballots are susceptible to family or organizational pressures, impacting the true representation of voters' choices.

INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES TO MAIL-IN VOTING

- France largely abolished mail-in voting in 1975 due to documented instances of fraud. Today, it restricts mail voting to citizens living abroad or individuals with specific needs, requiring strict documentation for eligibility.
- Germany prohibits mail-in voting for domestic elections, allowing it only for citizens living abroad or in specific, well-documented circumstances. The German government has cited security concerns and the potential for fraud as reasons for maintaining these restrictions on remote voting.
- India limits mail-in ballots to government employees, military personnel, and senior citizens over 80. The country enforces strict criteria to maintain the security of the voting process and avoid risks associated with unmonitored voting.

Conclusion

By recognizing the vulnerabilities associated with mail-in voting, we can implement stricter policies that limit its use to exceptional cases, ensuring a more secure and trustworthy election process.

Feedback, edits, additions? Please share! Together, let's make this a roadmap for election integrity in the days ahead!

SHARE FEEDBACK

REFORM: VOTER INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

7. Establish a National Voter Information Campaign for Voters' Rights and Election Integrity

Objective

To educate American voters on their rights, voting procedures, and the importance of election integrity while strengthening mechanisms to detect, report, and penalize electoral fraud. This initiative aims to enhance public confidence in the electoral process through transparency, accountability, and comprehensive education.

Why is Reform Necessary?

Establishing a National Voter Information Campaign for Voters' Rights and Election Integrity is essential to empower individuals, safeguard voters' rights, and enhance trust in the electoral system. Here are a few merits of such a campaign :

1. Empowering Citizens Through Knowledge
    - Informed Voters: Liberty thrives when individuals are fully informed about their rights and the mechanisms of a representative republic. A national campaign ensures that voters understand how to exercise their rights and participate effectively.
    - Reducing Misinformation: By providing clear, accurate information, a campaign can combat misinformation that undermines voters' confidence and ability to make informed choices.
2. Promoting Individual Responsibility
    - Encouraging Participation: A well-informed electorate is more likely to take personal responsibility for voting, registering on time, and understanding election procedures.
    - Building Confidence in the System: Transparency and education ensure that individuals trust the system and feel empowered to engage, reinforcing their role in self-governance.
3. Ensuring Equal Access to Information
    - Liberty for All: A national campaign can bridge gaps in awareness, especially in underserved or marginalized communities, ensuring every citizen has equal access to critical information about voting rights and processes.

- Protecting Against Disenfranchisement: Educating voters about their rights helps prevent disenfranchisement due to misunderstandings or administrative errors.

4. Safeguarding Election Integrity
    - Public Oversight: A campaign focused on election integrity educates citizens on how votes are cast, counted, and secured, fostering transparency and reducing opportunities for fraud or abuse.
    - Encouraging Civic Vigilance: By understanding the electoral process, individuals can hold government officials accountable, a key tenet of a free society.
5. Strengthening Trust in Democratic Institutions
    - Restoring Confidence: Liberty depends on a government that operates with the consent of the governed. A campaign that promotes election integrity reassures voters that their voices are heard and counted fairly.
    - Reducing Polarization: Clear communication about election processes can reduce partisan disputes, reinforcing trust across political divides.
6. Defending Against Authoritarianism
    - Transparency as a Shield: When voters understand their rights and the electoral process, it becomes harder for bad actors to exploit confusion or manipulate outcomes.
    - Preventing Power Consolidation: An informed electorate ensures that power remains distributed and accountable to the people, protecting against threats to liberty.
7. Encouraging Civic Engagement
    - Fostering Community: A national campaign can promote unity by emphasizing shared values and the importance of participation in securing liberty for all.
    - Inspiring Action: Highlighting the significance of each vote motivates citizens to engage actively in shaping their government.

Public Support

The recent Heartland Institute/Rasmussen poll highlights significant concerns among American voters regarding election integrity and voter behavior. Key findings include:

- Widespread Concerns About Election Cheating: A substantial 62% of likely voters are worried that cheating might influence the outcome of the 2024 election.
- Mail-in Ballot Issues: About 18% of respondents claimed they received more than one mail-in ballot or a ballot intended for someone else during the 2020 election. This figure rises to 20% in crucial battleground states like Arizona, Georgia, and Pennsylvania. This suggests potential vulnerabilities in mail-in voting processes, which continue to be a contentious issue.
- Voter Fraud Admissions: Alarmingly, one in five voters admitted to committing some form of voter fraud during the 2020 election. Additionally, nearly 30% of voters stated they would consider engaging in illegal voting practices if given the chance in the 2024 election. These findings highlight persistent concerns about the security and trustworthiness of the election process.
- Non-Citizen Voting: The poll also uncovered that around 9% of voters either identified as non-citizens or were unsure of their citizenship status, yet were still part of the voter pool. This raises questions about the accuracy of voter registration databases.

A National Voter Information Campaign is a vital tool to uphold liberty by ensuring voters are informed, empowered, and confident in their rights and the integrity of the electoral process. By prioritizing transparency, accountability, and equal access to information, such a campaign reinforces the principles of self-governance and individual freedom.

Implementation Timeframe: 12-18 months

- Phase 1 (6 months): Develop educational materials and multilingual resources.
- Phase 2 (6-12 months): Launch PSAs and voter workshops in partnership with local organizations.
- Key Costs: Media production, community outreach, and digital tools for voter education.

Key Reform Considerations

1. Launch a National Voter Education Campaign
    - Goals: Educate voters on their rights, the voting process, and the safeguards ensuring election integrity.
        - Content Development:
            - Create clear, nonpartisan educational materials explaining voter rights, how to register and vote, and steps to report election-related issues.
            - Emphasize the importance of election integrity and how safeguards protect the democratic process.
        - Distribution Channels:
            - Use TV, radio, social media, and print media for nationwide PSAs.
            - Partner with schools, libraries, and community organizations to host workshops and distribute materials.
            - Develop multilingual resources to reach diverse communities.
        - Voter Empowerment Tools:
            - Provide online and phone-based tools where voters can check registration, locate polling places, and understand ballot procedures.
            - Include FAQs addressing common misconceptions about voting and election fraud.
    - National Summit :
        - Host a National Summit on Voter Education and Election Integrity, bringing together a broad cross-section of election authorities, policymakers, civic organizations, and community leaders. The event would be livestreamed to ensure nationwide accessibility and encourage public participation. Sessions could include panels on voter rights, workshops on the voting process, and discussions about election safeguards. By inviting diverse perspectives, the summit fosters collaboration and transparency, empowering voters with knowledge while addressing their concerns about the electoral process. Interactive features such as Q&A sessions and polls would further engage the public and amplify their voices.
2. Establish Uniform Incident Clearinghouses in All States
    - Purpose: Create a centralized, standardized system in each state to track and resolve election-related incidents.

        - Clearinghouse Design:
            - Operate under state election boards with federal oversight to ensure uniform standards.
            - Accept reports of irregularities, technical issues, or suspected fraud from voters, election workers, and observers.
            - Use technology to provide real-time tracking of incidents, ensuring transparency and swift resolutions.
        - Collaboration:
            - Partner with local law enforcement and cybersecurity experts to investigate reported incidents.
            - Share non-confidential data with the public to demonstrate accountability.
        - Public Awareness:
            - Promote the clearinghouses as trusted resources for reporting and resolving election concerns.

3. Whistleblower Protections and Rewards

    - Goals: Encourage reporting of electoral fraud by protecting whistleblowers and incentivizing their participation.
        - Whistleblower Protections:
            - Pass legislation providing legal immunity and protection against retaliation for individuals who expose election law violations.
            - Ensure confidentiality for whistleblowers where necessary.
        - Reward Program:
            - Offer financial rewards for verified reports of electoral fraud that lead to prosecutions.
            - Establish a tiered reward system based on the severity and impact of the violations uncovered.
        - Public Outreach:
            - Launch a campaign encouraging individuals to report fraud, emphasizing protections and anonymity where applicable.

4. Enforce Stricter Penalties for Election Law Violations

    - Objective: Deter electoral misconduct by increasing penalties for those who break election laws.
        - Legislative Actions:
            - Implement minimum sentencing guidelines, including prison time, for severe election law violations such as ballot tampering, voter suppression, or fraud.
            - Include additional penalties for those in positions of trust, such as election officials or poll workers, who violate election laws.
        - Accountability Measures:
            - Require transparency in investigations and prosecutions of election crimes to build public trust.

        - Publicly report the outcomes of cases to demonstrate that violations are taken seriously.
    - Integrated Training:
        - Train law enforcement, election officials, and prosecutors to identify and address election law violations effectively.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Purpose: Assess the effectiveness of the campaign and initiatives to ensure continuous improvement.
    - Performance Metrics:
        - Measure public awareness of voting rights and procedures before and after the campaign.
        - Publicly track the number of incidents reported to clearinghouses and the outcomes of investigations.
        - Monitor the rate of whistleblower reports and the success of prosecutions tied to those reports.
    - Feedback Loops:
        - Conduct voter surveys to gather insights on the campaign's effectiveness and areas for improvement.
        - Use election data to refine clearinghouse operations and strengthen legal enforcement mechanisms.

Conclusion

This comprehensive plan leverages education, transparency, and accountability to empower voters, deter electoral misconduct, and strengthen public trust in elections. By combining a robust national information campaign with practical measures such as incident clearinghouses, whistleblower protections, and stricter penalties, this initiative ensures that every American can participate in a secure, fair, and trustworthy electoral process.

Feedback, edits, additions? Please share! Together, let's make this a roadmap for election integrity in the days ahead!

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8. Ensure Equal Access to Election Data

Objective

To promote accountability and trust in the electoral process, a framework for equal access to election data must be established. This plan ensures that all organizations, including public entities and independent auditors, have transparent, consistent, and fair access to open records and election data. By fostering openness, the initiative empowers third parties to verify results, conduct audits, and enhance public confidence in elections.

Why is Reform Necessary?

Ensuring equal access to election data is vital to uphold transparency, fairness, and accountability in the electoral process. Here's why it is necessary, particularly when addressing the disparity of data access given to organizations like the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL), and other NGOs, currently granted direct access to state election data and voter registration databases, while being withheld from others :

1. 1. Transparency and Accountability
    - Equal Opportunity to Scrutinize: Transparency in election data ensures that all stakeholders—citizens, candidates, political parties, and watchdog organizations—have equal access to verify the integrity of the electoral process.
    - Preventing Favoritism: Providing exclusive access to organizations like ERIC or CTCL can create perceptions of bias or undue influence. Equal access ensures no single entity holds an informational advantage over others.
    - Public Oversight: Equal access empowers the public to monitor election-related activities and hold institutions accountable for any errors or misconduct.
2. Safeguarding Election Integrity
    - Auditing and Verification: Access to voter registration databases and election data enables independent verification of election outcomes, ensuring that the process remains free from fraud or manipulation.
    - Preventing Misuse: When access is limited to select organizations, the risk of data misuse or partisan exploitation increases. Equal access minimizes the likelihood of data being leveraged for political or ideological purposes.
3. Promoting Equal Representation
    - Leveling the Playing Field: Granting privileged access to NGOs like CTCL, which has been criticized for disproportionately funding election administration in specific areas, can lead to unequal treatment of voters. Equal access to data ensures all regions and demographics are represented fairly.
    - Avoiding Partisan Perceptions: Ensuring transparency and broad access to data helps counteract concerns that certain groups are using voter information to favor one political party over another.

4. Empowering Individual Citizens
    - Informed Decision-Making: Liberty is grounded in the ability of individuals to make informed choices. Equal access to election data allows citizens to understand the mechanics of the electoral system, fostering trust and informed participation.
    - Preventing Concentration of Power: Restricting access to election data to a few organizations centralizes power, which contradicts liberty-focused principles of decentralization and citizen oversight.
5. Mitigating Privacy Concerns
    - Ensuring Accountability in Data Use: Organizations like ERIC manage sensitive voter registration data, but limited transparency about how data is used raises concerns about privacy violations. Equal access allows independent entities to monitor these processes, ensuring data is handled responsibly.
    - Preventing Data Exploitation: By granting access exclusively to certain NGOs, the system risks enabling misuse of voter data, such as targeting specific populations for political gain. Equal access discourages such exploitation.
6. Fostering Trust in the Electoral Process
    - Reducing Suspicion: When data access is restricted, it fuels skepticism about whether elections are being conducted fairly. Equal access to election data can help rebuild public confidence in the system.
    - Encouraging Bipartisanship: Allowing access to election data across the political spectrum ensures no single ideology or group has undue influence over how elections are monitored or managed.
7. Organization Examples
    - Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC): ERIC's stated mission is to support states in maintaining accurate voter rolls by cross-referencing voter registration data across state lines. While ERIC could play a valuable role, its access to sensitive data raises concerns about transparency. Equal access would allow third parties to verify its processes and outcomes.
    - Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL): CTCL has provided funding to local election offices but has faced criticism for perceived partisan biases in its distribution of resources. Equal access to the data CTCL uses and manages ensures that no group has an advantage in shaping election outcomes.
    - Other NGOs and Vendors: Many third-party organizations play significant roles in election administration. Equal data access ensures these groups operate transparently and without favoritism.

Public Support

Public opinion polls indicate strong support among Americans for transparency and equal access to open records. For example, a 2023 Civitas Poll in North Carolina found that 93.5% of likely voters believe open records laws are important for maintaining accountability, with a majority considering them extremely important. This support spans across political affiliations, with over 90% of both Democrats and Republicans recognizing the significance of open records.

Implementation Timeframe: 12-24 months

- Phase 1 (6-12 months): Standardize election data formats and accessibility.
- Phase 2 (6-12 months): Launch centralized repositories and public portals.
- Key Costs: Technology infrastructure for data storage and cybersecurity.

Key Reform Considerations

1. Standardized Data Accessibility
    - Develop uniform standards for how election data is shared, ensuring consistency across states and jurisdictions.
    - Ensure transparency and broad access to data to help counteract concerns that certain groups are using voter information to favor one political party over another.
    - Create centralized repositories where verified election data is securely stored and made accessible for public and organizational review.
2. Transparency in Data Availability
    - Include key datasets, such as vote totals, turnout rates, and chain-of-custody records, in the public domain.
    - Ensure data is anonymized or hashed as necessary to protect voter privacy while maintaining the integrity of the information.
3. Streamlined Public Request Process
    - Establish clear procedures for organizations and individuals to request election data, with standardized response times and minimal barriers.
    - Implement a digital portal for submitting and tracking data requests, increasing efficiency and transparency.
4. Empowering Independent Auditors
    - Provide data in accessible formats compatible with analysis tools, enabling third-party organizations to conduct audits and verify results.
    - Support training programs for organizations to understand and responsibly use election data for auditing and reporting purposes.
5. Safeguarding Data Integrity
    - Implement strict cybersecurity measures to protect election data from tampering or unauthorized access.
    - Ensure that only verified, official data sources are used for public and organizational access.

Benefits

- Enhanced Accountability: Equal access allows for independent verification, ensuring election outcomes are credible and transparent.
- Public Confidence: Open data promotes trust in the electoral process by demonstrating a commitment to transparency.
- Uniform Standards: Standardized access ensures fairness and avoids disparities between jurisdictions.

This plan establishes a secure, transparent system for election data access, empowering organizations to uphold the integrity and accountability of the electoral process.

Conclusion

Ensuring equal access to election data prevents concentration of power, allows independent verification of election integrity, and ensures all citizens and organizations can participate equally in monitoring and safeguarding the electoral process. By addressing the roles and access of entities like ERIC, CTCL, and other NGOs, this approach reinforces trust in elections while protecting individual freedoms and voters' rights.

Feedback, edits, additions? Please share! Together, let's make this a roadmap for election integrity in the days ahead!

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REFORM: FEDERAL STANDARDS

9. Update and Enforce Federal Election Standards

Objective

To establish reliable, efficient, and transparent election processes, key federal election standards—including the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) protocols—should be revised and modernized to align with best practices found in private industry. Though states dictate the time and place of elections, federal guidance could also help establish a single Election Day as a national holiday. The updates would focus on enhancing voter registration accuracy, improving voter access, and implementing robust election security measures.

Why is Reform Necessary?

Modernizing election laws like the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) and reevaluating the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) role in election processes are essential to ensure that election systems remain transparent, equitable, and secure while upholding individual freedoms and decentralization of power. Here's why:

1. Ensuring State Sovereignty and Decentralization
    - Federal Overreach: Federal involvement in state-managed election systems must be strictly limited to preserve the autonomy and integrity of state authority. Revisiting DHS's role helps prevent undue influence from centralized agencies, aligning with the principles of federalism.
    - Empowering States: Modernizing NVRA and HAVA can clarify and balance the federal government's role, ensuring states retain the authority to administer elections tailored to their unique needs.

2. Increasing Transparency and Trust

    - Modern Laws for Modern Challenges: NVRA (passed in 1993) and HAVA (passed in 2002) were designed for vastly different technological and political landscapes. Outdated provisions may hinder transparency and efficiency in elections.
    - Role of DHS: While DHS oversees election security as critical infrastructure, its involvement must be carefully reevaluated to ensure transparency without infringing on the independence of state election systems.

3. Enhancing Election Integrity

    - Updating NVRA to Address Modern Concerns:
        - NVRA's requirements for maintaining voter rolls are criticized for making it harder for states to remove ineligible voters. Modernizing this law can address these gaps, ensuring rolls are accurate without disenfranchising voters.
    - HAVA's Technological Reforms:
        - HAVA introduced electronic voting machines to eliminate punch-card issues, but these systems now pose cybersecurity risks. Updating HAVA can integrate modern security standards and emphasize auditability through paper trails.
    - Using DHS to Strengthen National Election Security:
        - In 2017, federal elections were designated to be part of the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) critical infrastructure, subjecting election processes to mandatory compliance with stringent federal standards. These standards include FISMA (Federal Information Security Management Act), FIPS (Federal Information Processing Standards), NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) guidelines, and DOD (Department of Defense) security protocols.
        - These standards require robust cybersecurity measures, strict data management practices, and rigorous access controls to safeguard election systems. Additionally, they prohibit dealings with foreign vendors and contractors in critical election infrastructure, ensuring that sensitive election operations remain secure and free from foreign influence or interference.
        - Many state and county administrators have yet to fully implement DHS election standards, leaving critical vulnerabilities that must be addressed to ensure uniform compliance and protect election integrity. To build public confidence and demonstrate a serious commitment to secure and trustworthy elections, administrators must integrate these standards in a way that allows people to clearly see what actions are being taken and how they are being implemented.

4. Adapting to Technological and Cybersecurity Threats

    - Cybersecurity Oversight:
        - Modern elections face threats unimaginable when NVRA and HAVA were passed. Updating these laws ensures robust cybersecurity protections without creating overcentralized vulnerabilities.
    - DHS's Cybersecurity Role:
        - DHS's involvement in securing election systems must balance between safeguarding against

cyberattacks and respecting state autonomy. Pro-liberty reforms would focus on advisory roles rather than direct control.

5. Promoting Equal Access While Preventing Abuse
    - Addressing Mail-In Voting and Registration Vulnerabilities:
        - NVRA's focus on accessibility must be updated to include safeguards against voter fraud and ballot harvesting/trafficking, ensuring every legitimate vote counts without unnecessary barriers.
    - Improving Accessibility Standards:
        - HAVA's mandate for accessible voting systems should incorporate modern innovations to balance security with inclusivity.

Public Support

A 2023 Brookings Institution analysis highlights that the demand for "very major" government reform has reached a 30-year high, reflecting widespread public desire for substantial changes in federal operations

Implementation Timeframe: 24-36 months

- Phase 1 (6-12 months): Legislative overhaul of NVRA, HAVA, and DHS protocols.
- Phase 2 (12-24 months): Implement uniform voter registration standards and election security measures.
- Key Costs: Technology upgrades, training, and federal grants to states.

Key Reform Consideration:

1. Enhanced Voter Registration Accuracy
    - Introduce uniform standards for voter roll maintenance to reduce inaccuracies, eliminate duplicate registrations, and prevent ineligible voting.
    - Leverage secure data-sharing protocols between federal and state agencies to verify eligibility and citizenship while respecting privacy.
2. Improved Voter Access
    - Streamline registration processes to ensure accessibility for all eligible voters, including online and same-day registration options.
    - Allocate federal funding to support states in expanding secure polling infrastructure, reducing barriers to voter participation.
3. Strengthened Election Security
    - Modernize election security protocols by adopting industry-standard measures, such as secure chain-of-custody procedures and advanced threat detection systems.
    - Transition federal oversight from direct intervention to a supportive role, emphasizing state autonomy while providing resources for compliance and transparency.
4. Sunsetting CISA and EAC
    - Replace the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and Election Assistance Commission (EAC) with streamlined systems that focus on supporting state election efforts.

- Federal roles should concentrate on data access, compliance oversight, and funding state-led reforms.

5. Federal Funding for State Reforms

    - Federal grants can play a pivotal role in helping states modernize their election processes by providing the necessary financial resources for upgrades and innovation. By reducing the financial burden on states, federal grants encourage widespread adoption of best practices and standards, fostering a more secure, efficient, and transparent electoral process.

Conclusion

Updating and enforcing federal election standards will improve accuracy, access, and security while reinforcing the states' leadership in election management. By transitioning federal involvement to a supportive role and aligning processes with private-sector best practices, this plan will create a transparent, efficient, and reliable electoral system that fosters public trust and better ensures process integrity.

Feedback, edits, additions? Please share! Together, let's make this a roadmap for election integrity in the days ahead!

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REFORM: "RIGHT TO TRY"

10. Develop "Right to Try" Legislation for Election Innovation

Objective

The "Right to Try" framework for election technology aims to foster innovation and competition among election vendors while reducing the risk of politically motivated litigation. Modeled after the healthcare initiative, this legislation would protect election vendors from frivolous lawsuits and lawfare (political targeting through excessive litigation), provided they meet legal and regulatory requirements for service. By creating a supportive environment for technological advancements, this initiative seeks to enhance the security, efficiency, and reliability of election systems.

Why is Reform Necessary?

Developing "Right to Try" legislation for election innovation represents a necessary electoral reform because it prioritizes individual choice, decentralization, competition, and efficiency while safeguarding against government overreach and politically motivated interference.

We are calling our recommended election legislation "Right to Try" to emphasize its dual mission of fostering innovation and shielding election technology vendors from the crippling impact of frivolous lawsuits. This parallels

the healthcare "Right to Try" initiative, which allowed patients to access experimental treatments while driving medical innovation. In the electoral sphere, litigation has become a significant obstacle, stalling necessary reforms and deterring vendors from introducing new technologies due to the fear of politically motivated lawsuits.

"Right to Try" for election innovation creates a legal framework that protects vendors who meet rigorous standards, allowing them to develop and deploy advanced election systems without the constant threat of debilitating legal challenges. This shield from excessive lawsuits empowers vendors to focus on enhancing election security, accessibility, and efficiency, while also fostering competition and reducing reliance on a few dominant providers.

Just as the healthcare initiative provided hope to patients by enabling access to life-saving treatments, our election "Right to Try" legislation aims to restore hope and trust in the democratic process. By removing litigation barriers and encouraging responsible innovation, this legislation ensures that the future of elections is secure, transparent, and adaptable to evolving challenges, offering a clear path forward for meaningful reform.

The following seven points demonstrate why and how this framework aligns with liberty-focused principles:

1. Encouraging Innovation Through Freedom
    - Fostering Innovation: By reducing the risk of litigation for election technology vendors, the "Right to Try" legislation ensures that innovative solutions can flourish without being stifled by excessive bureaucracy or legal challenges.
    - Empowering States: States retain the freedom to choose among diverse, cutting-edge election technologies rather than relying on a limited number of outdated or monopolistic vendors.
    - Decentralized Progress: Encouraging local experimentation aligns with the pro-liberty principle of decentralization, allowing states to adopt solutions tailored to their unique needs.
2. Minimizing Federal Overreach
    - Limiting Federal Control: This legislation promotes a bottom-up approach to electoral reform by empowering states and private vendors to drive technological advancements, rather than imposing top-down federal mandates.
    - Preventing Bureaucratic Bottlenecks: Shielding election vendors from frivolous lawsuits ensures that progress isn't delayed by excessive regulation or politically motivated interference.
3. Enhancing Market Competition
    - Reducing Monopolies: A free and competitive market for election technology reduces reliance on a small number of entrenched vendors, mitigating systemic vulnerabilities and fostering innovation.
    - Leveling the Playing Field: Protecting smaller and emerging companies from burdensome litigation enables them to compete fairly, promoting a diversity of solutions that enhance election security and efficiency.
4. Strengthening Election Integrity
    - Rigorous Standards, Not Overregulation: The "Right to Try" framework emphasizes clear, uniform standards for election technology, ensuring security and reliability while avoiding excessive government interference.
    - Accountability Through Transparency: Independent oversight boards ensure that vendors meet high operational benchmarks, building public trust in the electoral process.

5. Defending Against Politically Motivated Litigation
    - Protecting Innovation: By shielding vendors from baseless lawsuits, the legislation prevents political agendas from interfering with technological progress in elections.
    - Safeguarding Resources: Fewer frivolous lawsuits mean resources are focused on improving election systems rather than navigating legal battles, benefiting both vendors and taxpayers.
6. Reinforcing Individual Choice and Liberty
    - Supporting Accessible Elections: Innovative election technologies improve accessibility and efficiency, ensuring every individual has an equal opportunity to participate in the democratic process.
    - Encouraging State Autonomy: States maintain the freedom to adopt technologies that best serve their voters, fostering a decentralized and liberty-driven electoral system.
7. Aligning with Public Sentiment
    - Innovation as a Cultural Value: With 92% of Americans valuing innovation and 77% recognizing the United States as a global leader in this area, the "Right to Try" legislation reflects the public's trust in progress and ingenuity.
    - Reducing Political Influence in Courts: By addressing the concern that the majority of Americans believe courts have become too political, this framework ensures that election technology is shielded from partisan exploitation.

Public Support

A 2018 Ipsos poll revealed that 92% of Americans believe innovation is a significant part of American culture and history, with 77% considering the United States a global leader in innovation.

Additionally, another 2019 Gallup poll demonstrates that around 75% of Americans believe the courts have become too political.

Implementation Timeframe: 12-24 months

- Phase 1 (6-12 months): Pass federal and state-level "Right to Try" legislation.
- Phase 2 (6-12 months): Partner with vendors to pilot innovative technologies.
- Key Costs: Vendor support, certification processes, and independent oversight boards.

Key Reform Considerations

1. Legal Protections for Election Vendors
    - Provide liability protection for vendors whose products and services meet established legal and technical standards.
    - Ensure vendors are shielded from baseless lawsuits that could stifle innovation or delay the deployment of advanced election technologies.
2. Encouraging Innovation in Election Technology
    - Create a safe space for vendors to test and implement new technologies designed to improve election security, accessibility, and efficiency.

- Promote research and development by reducing the legal risks associated with introducing innovative election tools and systems.

3. Establishing Rigorous Standards

   - Develop clear, uniform standards for election technologies in collaboration with state election officials, cybersecurity experts, and independent auditors.
   - Require vendors to undergo regular testing and certification to ensure their solutions meet high-security and operational benchmarks.

4. Increasing Vendor Competition

   - Level the playing field for small and emerging companies by reducing the financial burden of defending against politically motivated lawsuits.
   - Encourage diversity in the election technology market, which reduces reliance on a small number of vendors and mitigates systemic vulnerabilities.

Implementation Strategy

- Legislative Framework: Introduce federal and state-level legislation that codifies liability protections for vendors while holding them accountable to rigorous standards.
- Partnerships: Collaborate with election officials, industry leaders, and watchdog organizations to establish guidelines for the use of innovative election technology.
- Oversight and Transparency: Create independent review boards to oversee the implementation of new technologies, ensuring compliance and building public confidence.

Conclusion

The "Right to Try" framework for election innovation represents a balanced approach to modernizing electoral systems. It limits federal overreach, encourages state autonomy, fosters market competition and innovation, and safeguards against politically motivated interference.

Feedback, edits, additions? Please share! Together, let's make this a roadmap for election integrity in the days ahead!

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Budget Considerations

We recognize that budgeting for these reforms presents a significant challenge, as the costs will vary depending on state needs and the scope of implementation. While we cannot provide a definitive estimate, we have outlined the following considerations to guide financial planning:

1. 1. Scope of Implementation

- National vs. State-Level Rollouts: The scale of the project, whether it's nationwide or focused on individual states, significantly impacts costs.
- Pilot Programs: Many initiatives include smaller-scale pilot phases to test processes before a full rollout. These phases require funding for localized implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

2. Technology and Infrastructure

   - Procurement and Development: For reforms like voter ID systems or enhanced polling infrastructure, costs include developing or purchasing the necessary technology, such as distributed ledger platforms, secure data-sharing systems, or high-security paper ballots.
   - Cybersecurity: Safeguarding election data and systems requires investing in cybersecurity measures to prevent hacking or tampering.
   - Hardware Costs: Physical equipment like ballot boxes, secure servers, or voter ID production equipment adds to the budget.

3. Staffing and Training

   - Election Workers: Hiring, training, and compensating additional staff to implement reforms, such as monitoring polling places or managing updated systems.
   - IT and Data Specialists: Ensuring systems are secure and functional requires skilled personnel, particularly for technology-heavy reforms.

4. Public Education and Outreach

   - Educational Campaigns: Creating awareness about changes (e.g., voter ID requirements or new ballot submission methods) involves costs for marketing campaigns, materials, and multilingual resources.
   - Community Engagement: Hosting workshops, Q&A sessions, and public demonstrations to educate voters on new processes.

5. Legal and Administrative Costs

   - Legislation Development: Crafting and passing new laws or revising existing ones incurs costs for legal experts, consultants, and administrative processes.
   - Litigation Defense: Anticipated legal challenges to new reforms may require budget allocation for defense.

6. Maintenance and Updates

   - Sustainability: Budgeting for ongoing maintenance, such as updating voter rolls, maintaining infrastructure, and training new staff, ensures long-term effectiveness.
   - Software Licenses and Upgrades: Technology reforms, especially those relying on distributed ledgers or data-sharing systems, require periodic updates and licensing fees.

7. Benchmarks and Comparable Costs

   - Past Programs: Budget estimates are often informed by similar initiatives. For example:
     - The cost of implementing REAL ID across states provides a reference point for voter ID rollout.

    - Historical data on the cost of voting machines and paper ballot production offers benchmarks for budgeting secure ballot reforms.
- Private Sector Practices: Comparing election processes to equivalent private-sector practices, such as data security or transaction monitoring, helps provide realistic cost estimates.

Example Calculations

- Voter ID Implementation ($500 million):
    - Technology: $250 million for developing and deploying distributed ledger systems and ID production capabilities.
    - Staffing: $100 million for training election workers and administrative personnel.
    - Public Education: $50 million for nationwide campaigns to inform voters of ID requirements.
    - Legal: $50-100 million for contingency costs, regional variations, and legal processes.
- Clean Voter Rolls ($250 million):
    - Data Integration: $50 million for creating a federal "data lake" and integrating state systems.
    - Technology and Cybersecurity: $50-100 million for securing data-sharing processes and maintaining accuracy.
    - Ongoing Maintenance: $50-100 million annually for updating and auditing voter rolls.

Assumptions and Variables

All figures are subject to variation based on:

- Legislative timelines.
- Technology adoption rates.
- Regional cost differences.
- Unforeseen challenges (e.g., legal hurdles or opposition).

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In Closing

This ten-point plan presents a comprehensive and balanced strategy to improve the U.S. electoral system, addressing critical concerns about security, transparency, and individual freedoms. By fortifying election integrity, enhancing public trust, and respecting state sovereignty, this framework aims to support a resilient electoral system that upholds the principles of our republic and empowers every citizen to participate with confidence.

Equally important to the "what" of these reforms is the "who" tasked with implementing them. To ensure credibility and public trust, True the Vote strongly advocates that leadership responsible for enacting these reforms should be free from political motivations. While we recognize that elected officials, attorneys, and similar experts are important participants in the conversation, equally vital are grassroots organizations and voter focus groups, whose voices reflect the diverse perspectives of the American electorate.

Although no electoral system is flawless, many of the challenges we face today stem from years of partisan maneuvering that have eroded trust and fairness in our elections. We hope this plan serves as a catalyst for discussion, debate, and the introduction of new ideas. We encourage feedback, edits, and collaboration to ensure these reforms reflect the collective wisdom and aspirations of the American people. Together, we can and must do better.