



Secure Democracy is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working to improve election integrity across the United States.

We use sophisticated survey and messaging research to inform our strategy and work with both Republicans and Democrats to accomplish our strategic imperatives. This year alone, Secure Democracy helped [Kentucky](#) enact its first law establishing an early in-person voting period, we helped [Washington](#) enact voting rights restoration for formerly incarcerated citizens returning to their communities, we helped preserve at-will, early in-person voting in [Georgia](#), and we are actively running campaigns to protect and expand voter access in a diverse range of states, including [Texas](#), [Florida](#), [Missouri](#), [Arizona](#), and many more.

The state and national partners we work with run the gamut. In addition to business leaders, our partners include current and former government officials on both sides of the aisle, conservative political analysts, veterans and military families, and advocates for older voters and those with disabilities.

Business has a unique opportunity to lead. Since the passage of restrictive voting legislation in Georgia, [more than 200 companies](#) spanning a variety of sectors have spoken out in defense of voting rights. From major sports leagues like Major League Baseball to financial institutions like Bank of America, companies are voicing opposition to measures that restrict voting access, with significant [implications for state economies](#).

Our most recent national polling of right-of-center voters has found the business community to be the number one most trusted messenger. Our findings are consistent with other market research finding trust in government is low and expectations for business leaders to fill the void is high. Nearly 90% of consumers worldwide expect CEOs to speak out on important social issues and 7 in 10 believe CEOs should “step in” to fix social problems when government fails, according to Edelman’s [2021 Trust Barometer](#).

A [recent poll](#) from the Civic Responsibility Project found that 82% of Americans would feel more favorable towards a company that supports policies to make it easier for Americans to vote and register to vote, including more than seven in ten Republicans and nine in ten Democrats. Six in ten Americans would consider buying a product or using a service from a company that spoke out against restrictive voting laws.

It’s not just consumers who are looking for corporate action — workforces also expect their employers to speak out. A recent Garner [study](#) found that three-quarters of employees expect their employer to take a stance on current societal or cultural issues.

Sixty-eight percent would consider moving to companies that take a stronger stance on issues than their current company does.



Today, voting access is at risk for 190 million Americans — and nearly 8 million Ohio voters.

Our proud tradition of state and local control over elections should be strengthened. But right now, we're seeing unrelenting efforts to limit Americans' freedom to vote across the country.

This year there have been more than 385 anti-voter policies considered in more than 43 states that would create significant barriers to voting for about 190 million voters — particularly for people of color, older voters, people with disabilities, veterans, and Americans living in rural communities — if enacted.

Ohio is already home to stringent voting restrictions.

Ohio voters deserve the same freedom to vote that other Americans enjoy, but Ohio is already home to policies that create significant barriers to casting a ballot. These are some of the policies already enacted in Ohio that restrict voter access and freedom:

- ▶ **Ohio offers only one early voting site per county.** Early in-person voting is one of the most popular voting methods across the country, and many states give counties flexibility to establish multiple early in-person voting sites to meet the needs of their voters, including states like Kansas, Iowa, Kentucky, and Georgia
- ▶ **Ohio severely limits the availability of secure ballot drop boxes.** Ballot drop boxes can provide a convenient and secure way for voters to return their ballot, and are particularly useful for voters who may lack access to reliable transportation. But Ohio only offers one drop box per county, and mandates it be located in close proximity to the board of elections office.
- ▶ **Ohio is still using an antiquated absentee ballot request system.** States like North Carolina, Kentucky, and Georgia have all adopted online ballot request systems in recent years, yet Ohio still requires voters to mail or personally deliver a paper copy of their ballot request form.

Ohio voters across the political spectrum take advantage of the options available to them. In the 2020 general election:

- ▶ A majority of Ohio voters did not vote in-person on Election Day — 53% of votes were cast by mail.
- ▶ Diverse groups of voters exercised the freedom to vote by mail in overwhelming numbers, including:
 - ▷ 56% of voters aged 55 or older
 - ▷ 52% of Republican voters
 - ▷ 66% of veterans and active duty military
 - ▷ 45% of voters earning less than \$75,000/year



New legislation threatens to limit Ohio voters' access further.

Rather than providing voters with greater freedom to choose how they vote, many Ohio lawmakers are **considering introducing** highly restrictive bills that would impose serious — and senseless — barriers to the ballot. Some of the measures being considered include but are not limited to:

- ▶ **Imposing stricter ID requirements for absentee voting by mail and in-person (early voting).** Lawmakers are considering policies that would make it more difficult to vote by mail or vote early with an absentee ballot by increasing ID requirements to vote by mail and requiring two ID numbers in lieu of just one voter ID for in-person absentee voters.
- ▶ **Cutting early voting opportunities.** Lawmakers are considering policies that would end in-person absentee voting on the Sunday and Monday before Election Day.
- ▶ **Eliminating secure drop boxes.** Lawmakers are considering policies that would statutorily limit available drop boxes to a single drop box per county or even eliminate drop boxes altogether.
- ▶ **Shortening the window to apply for absentee ballots.** Lawmakers are considering policies that would move the deadline to apply for absentee ballots back from the third day before Election Day to the tenth day before Election Day.

Ohio business leaders can lead by asking for simple solutions to modernize Ohio elections.

Business leaders have an opportunity to lead by publicly voicing their concerns that these bills would harm democracy. Secure Democracy's internal polling conducted in March 2021 by a conservative research firm found that 70% of right-of-center voters, including Ohio voters, considered business leaders trustworthy, which was among the highest percentage of any group tested. Ohio companies including Procter & Gamble, Eaton Corporation and Abercrombie & Fitch have already spoken out in support of protecting voting access.

Public statements in support of our fundamental freedom to vote are a critical first step, but acting to oppose legislation and support key reforms demonstrates your brand is genuine to your values. We encourage business leaders to join our efforts to oppose restrictive legislation, and we welcome your support calling on Ohio lawmakers to enact common sense solutions to modernize election procedures and improve access for all voters. This includes:

- ▶ **Expand early voting by allowing counties to offer multiple locations.** Early in-person voting is one of the most popular voting methods across the political spectrum. This year alone, states like Georgia, Kentucky, and Missouri have all expanded early voting opportunities and Ohio should follow suit.
- ▶ **Establish an online ballot request system (as proposed in S.B. 191).** Ohio should modernize its absentee request system to allow voters to securely request their ballot online. Not only is an online system more convenient for voters, it saves taxpayer dollars by reducing the staff time it currently takes to process paper applications.
- ▶ **Modernize and automate the voter registration system (as proposed in S.B. 186).** Ohio has spent millions of dollars over the past few years to simply maintain its voter rolls. By upgrading and integrating the voter registration system with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, eligible Ohioans can seamlessly register or transfer their registered address any time they renew their driver's license. Automating this system will keep Ohio's voter rolls accurate and up-to-date, and will save taxpayers the expense of mailing confirmation notices to hundreds of thousands of voters who move each year.