

The Voter Empowerment Act Fast Facts

- Approximately **3 million Americans** tried to vote in the 2008 Presidential election but were **turned away** due to voter registration problems.¹
- More than **24 million voter registration records** in the U.S.—1 in 8—are inaccurate, out of date, or duplicates. Moreover, **51 million eligible voters**—1 in 4—are not registered to vote.²
- In Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania, the **combined number of registered voters has dropped by over 500,000 since 2008.**³
- Since 2008 nationwide, the number of **Latinos registered to vote has decreased by 5 percent**, and the number of **African Americans registered has decreased by 7 percent.**⁴
- Since the beginning of 2011, **176 bills restricting voting rights have been introduced in 41 states**, and 74 of these restrictive bills are currently pending in 24 states.⁵
- Since the beginning of 2011, **22 laws and 2 executive actions restricting voting have passed in 17 states.** 14 states have passed, or are on the verge of passing, restrictive voting laws that have the potential to impact the 2012 election. 11 laws and executive actions have taken effect in 7 states.⁶
- Florida, Illinois and Texas have **passed laws restricting voter registration drives**, and Florida and Wisconsin **passed laws making it more difficult for people who move to stay registered and vote.** Ohio ended its weeklong period of same-day voter registration.⁷
- Florida, Georgia, Ohio, Tennessee, and West Virginia have **reduced early voting.**⁸
- The Department of Defense Inspector General has repeatedly noted a **persistent failure of the Federal Voting Assistance Program** to provide consistently effective assistance to military voters, specifically identifying a **lack of voter awareness of the existence of resources** to assist in the voting process.⁹
- The **high incidence of ballot delivery and return failure** in 2008 translates to approximately 275,884 UOCAVA voters failing to return a ballot cast to them. While 91% of the general electorate returns their absentee ballot, **only 67% of UOCAVA voters successfully do so.**¹⁰
- In 2009, a **majority of polling places still had one or more impediments that could prevent a voter with a disability from even getting to the required accessible voting system.** In close to half of polling places, the accessible voting system itself could pose challenges for voters with disabilities to vote privately or independently.¹¹
- Election Day registration **boosts turnout by approximately 5-7 points**—with a decreased dependence on provisional ballots and without any reported increase in voter fraud.¹²

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¹ Wendy R. Weiser and Lawrence Norden, *Voting Law Changes in 2012*, Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law (October 2011) (online at http://brennan.3cdn.net/92635ddafbc09e8d88_i3m6bjdeh.pdf).

² *Inaccurate, Costly, and Inefficient: Evidence That America's Voter Registration System Needs an Upgrade*, Pew Center on the States (February 2012) (online at http://www.pewstates.org/uploadedFiles/PCS_Assets/2012/Pew_Upgrading_Voter_Registration.pdf).

³ Michelle Diggles, *Flight to the Center: Voter Registration 6 months Out*, Third Way (May 7, 2012) (online at <http://www.thirdway.org/publications/522>).

⁴ Krissah Thompson, *Voter Registration down among Hispanics, blacks*, Washington Post (May 4, 2011) (online at http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/voter-registration-down-among-hispanics-blacks/2012/05/04/gIQAOqEY1T_story.html).

⁵ *2012 Summary of Voting Law Changes*, Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law (April 5, 2012) (online at http://www.brennancenter.org/content/resource/2012_summary_of_voting_law_changes/).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Federal Voting Assistance Program: Report on the Status and Implementation of Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act Programs*, Federal Voting Assistance Program (March 2011) (online at http://www.fvap.gov/resources/media/2010_180_day_report.pdf).

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Voters with Disabilities: Additional Monitoring of Polling Places Could Further Improve Accessibility*, Government Accountability Office (September 2009) (online at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d09941.pdf>).

¹² *Election Day Registration*, Brennan Center for Justice (online at http://www.brennancenter.org/content/section/category/election_day_registration).