

The Voter ID Act Unreasonably Restricts the Freedom to Vote

The right to vote is the cornerstone of American democracy, and Congress should be working to **enhance—rather than restrict—access to the ballot for eligible voters**. Unfortunately, the Voter ID Act, [H.R. 9368](#), would impose significant new barriers to participation, overhauling the way voters nationwide prove their identity at the polls.

This bill, which mirrors the voter ID provisions in the [unpopular SAVE Act](#), would require voters to show photo identification before casting a ballot in a federal election. **But the list of acceptable forms of identification in the Voter ID Act is unreasonably narrow—and significantly more restrictive than almost every state voter ID law currently in place.** The legislation limits valid ID to only driver's licenses, state ID cards, passports, military or VA IDs, and certain Tribal IDs. It excludes widely used forms of identification such as student, employee, and public assistance IDs, even though young people and voters of color disproportionately rely on these IDs and [many states with voter ID requirements accept them](#).

The Voter ID Act would [force at least 35 states](#) that already have photo ID or similar requirements to make significant changes to their election laws, while 14 states and DC would have to entirely overhaul their procedures. This would necessitate significant voter education and poll worker training. Yet, the bill provides no resources or time for state and local officials to implement these changes.

The bill's treatment of Tribal identification likewise raises serious problems. While Tribal IDs are included in the legislation, most would not actually meet the bill's requirements because it mandates they contain a photo and expiration date to be considered valid. However, because one's Tribal citizenship never "expires," [many Tribal IDs simply lack an expiration date](#). Similarly, many Tribal IDs also lack a photograph of the holder. This means that an eligible Native voter who relies on such ID would be unable to cast a ballot and have it counted.

Finally, the Voter ID Act does not provide a meaningful failsafe for eligible Americans who do not possess one of the bill's limited types of ID—a common practice in states with voter ID requirements. Although the bill allows individuals without ID to cast a provisional ballot, it conditions the counting of that ballot on the voter returning within three days with qualifying ID or completing an affidavit stating they have a religious objection to being photographed. This excludes the vast majority of eligible voters [who may lack ID](#) for other common reasons—such as cost, access, or administrative barriers—and it does not function as a true alternative. As a result, many Americans could be prevented from voting.

At a time when our democratic process is facing unprecedented threats—including the evisceration of the Voting Rights Act, a redistricting race to the bottom, and efforts to subvert election results—**Congress should be focused on strengthening Americans' ability to participate in elections**. We urge all lawmakers to oppose the Voter ID Act, which represents a desperate attempt to advance parts of the SAVE Act, a bill that voters have repeatedly told their members of Congress to reject because it would infringe on the rights of millions and undermine the core principles of our democracy.