

WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE

AND WHY IT'S AS IMPORTANT AS EVER

ACLU
Georgia

**VOTE YOUR
★ RIGHTS ★**

This election, let's remind Georgia's elected officials that they don't have the final say when it comes to our rights — we do. The ACLU of Georgia urges you to make a plan to vote and take action; make sure your friends and family are ready too.

The right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy and the fundamental right upon which all our civil liberties rest. As we approach the upcoming presidential election, take a moment to recognize the critical importance of your participation in the democratic process. Georgians' voices are their power, and voting is the most direct way to express that power.

Here are the issues important to our supporters and key reasons why your vote matters:

VOTING RIGHTS

Voting should be equally accessible for all Georgians, no matter what county they live in, the color of their skin, or how much money they make.

- Following several years of the Georgia Legislature passing harmful voting-related bills, the fight for voting rights remains as critical as ever.
- Politicians continue to engage in voter suppression efforts including additional obstacles to registration, access to the ballot, and large-scale dilution of minority voters' rights.
- The most powerful and impactful way to combat the injustice of voter suppression is to vote.
- That's why it's important we elect leaders who want to make sure every eligible voter can access the ballot box.

Q: I thought everyone could vote. Is voter suppression a real thing?

A: Voter suppression, the practice of influencing the outcome of an election by discouraging or preventing specific groups of people from voting, is a real problem. Voter suppression bills such as Georgia's Senate bills 202 and 222 put up unnecessary barriers for people to register to vote or vote in person. Our democracy works best when all eligible voters can participate and have their voices heard.

Q: I've been hearing about voter fraud? Is it a real problem?

A: There is no evidence that the U.S. or the state of Georgia has a problem with voter fraud. Studies have shown there's less than a one-tenth of a percent chance of voter fraud nationwide. Many studies have found that voter fraud is extraordinarily rare, yet some public officials continue to tell Georgians falsehoods about the state of our elections. The true threat to our elections is voter suppression, not fraud.

ABORTION RIGHTS

The decision to get an abortion shouldn't belong to politicians — it should belong to individual Georgians and their families.

Currently, the ACLU of Georgia alongside co-counsel are challenging the state's six-week ban in state court (*SisterSong v. State*) based on the Georgia Constitution. We are awaiting an order from the trial judge. While the ban remains in effect, Georgians should vote their values and support candidates who champion abortion access and comprehensive reproductive healthcare.

- Forcing someone to carry a pregnancy against their will has life-altering consequences, including long-lasting serious health risks. This makes it harder for Georgians to escape poverty, derailing education, career, and life plans.
- Anti-abortion politicians won't stop at banning care after six weeks. They want to ban abortion entirely, nationwide.
- This election will determine if we have elected officials fighting for abortion rights. This is a dire moment. Your votes are needed.

Q: Is there anything Georgians can do to protect abortion rights on the federal level?

A: Yes, Congress can pass a law that would protect access to abortion nationwide and override our harmful state ban. But that won't be possible unless we elect a strong, pro-abortion rights majority in the U.S. House and Senate this November that will fight for our fundamental rights.

Q: What about on the local level?

A: In Georgia, the state supreme court, the governor, and the state legislature will be the ones making policies on abortion rights. That's why it's so important to vote for your rights in your local offices as well as federal ones.

FREE SPEECH

Free speech is one of our most foundational rights as Americans and Georgians, and it should be protected fervently.

Censoring speech in our most sacred places – schools, communities, and online – prevents expression that is tantamount to principles of open discourse and debate. We encourage you to vote for elected officials who support a multicultural democracy statewide.

- The state cannot (should not) ban books or censor classroom discussions about race and gender just because they disagree with them.
- School boards statewide are moving to ban books — predominantly those by Black and LGBTQ+ authors — from public schools and libraries.
- Legislation like Georgia's classroom censorship bill (HB 1087) puts politicians between students and their teachers. By voting, we can elect officials who are open to debate and learning.

Q: Is banning books a violation of the First Amendment?

A: The First Amendment protects our right to receive information and share ideas free from viewpoint-based censorship. The government can't ban books in public schools or libraries just because it dislikes the ideas contained in those books, nor may it do so for partisan, political, or viewpoint-based reasons. That is a violation of the First Amendment.

Q: How are banning books in schools and libraries, and classroom censorship racial justice issues?

A: Having the freedom to read what we want, explore new ideas, and encounter a variety of perspectives ensures that we all have the ability to read, learn, and form our own opinions. This includes having the opportunity to engage with the history, experiences, and viewpoints of our diverse communities. Voting for lawmakers who respect the above can help provide young Georgians the tools and spaces they need to develop their own critical thinking skills.