



# How North Carolina Elections Would Look Different if the Freedom to Vote Act Had Been Enacted

By Greta Bedekovics, Sydney Bryant, and Alice Lillydahl | October 10, 2024

The Freedom to Vote Act (FTVA) would expand access to the ballot box for millions of Americans and ensure that all citizens can easily exercise their right to vote, regardless of their ZIP code. At the same time, this transformational federal voting rights legislation would strengthen election security, improve election administration and campaign finance transparency, and ban partisan gerrymandering.

The FTVA would make voting easier and more secure for more than 7.5 million voting-age North Carolina citizens, of which more than 4.5 million are currently registered to vote. A new report from the Center for American Progress provides analysis and statistical extrapolations to illustrate how the 2024 and subsequent election cycles would be transformed if the FTVA's key voting policies had been enacted in 2022, when the legislation was blocked through the use of the filibuster on the U.S. Senate floor.<sup>1</sup>

**Read the full report:**  
[Pass the Freedom to Vote Act: How Elections Would Look Different This Year and in the Future](#)

Analysis and projections for North Carolina, based on previous academic and expert research as well as original research, demonstrate the transformative impact the FTVA could have for voters in the state.

Unless otherwise cited, the author conducted original analysis and created projections primarily based on data published by the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Election Assistance Commission for past federal election cycles. For a comprehensive look at the data analyzed for this fact sheet, see [here](#).

To put some of the findings below into perspective, the 2016 North Carolina election was decided by 173,000 voters, the 2020 North Carolina presidential election was decided by 74,000 voters, and the 2022 North Carolina U.S. Senate election was decided by 122,000 voters.<sup>2</sup>

# 173,000

voters decided the 2016 North Carolina presidential election

# 74,000

voters decided the 2020 North Carolina presidential election

# 122,000

voters decided the 2022 North Carolina U.S. Senate election

# 486,000

additional North Carolina voters would likely cast a ballot in the 2024 general election

## Automatic voter registration

The FTVA would ensure eligible North Carolina citizens can automatically register to vote through the department of motor vehicles.<sup>3</sup> Automatic voter registration (AVR) has been shown to be critical not only for registering voters and keeping voter rolls up to date but also for closing racial gaps in voter registration rates. Given the measured impacts that AVR has had in other states:

- Approximately **1 million North Carolinians** likely would have newly registered to vote through AVR, including approximately 22,000 Hispanic North Carolinians and 179,000 Black North Carolinians.
- Approximately **783,000 already registered North Carolina voters** likely would have updated their voter registration information using AVR ahead of the 2024 general election.
- Approximately **486,000 additional North Carolina voters** would likely cast a ballot in the 2024 general election, including approximately 86,000 Black North Carolinians and 10,000 Hispanic North Carolinians.

## Same-day voter registration

The FTVA would ensure eligible North Carolina citizens can register to vote at the polls not only during the state's early voting period—as is currently allowed—but also on Election Day.<sup>4</sup> Same-day voter registration (SDR) greatly benefits communities that tend to move more frequently and therefore need to update their voter registration information more often; Hispanic Americans and young Americans are among the demographic populations that move around the most frequently.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, SDR helps mitigate issues with inaccurate voter roll purges that often disproportionately affect voters of color.<sup>6</sup> The SDR policy in the FTVA would ensure that voters inaccurately removed from the voter rolls are able not only to re-register at the polls but also to cast a nonprovisional ballot.

Across the past three federal election cycles, Hispanic voters in states with SDR had an average voter turnout rate that was 6.6 percentage points higher than that of Hispanic voters in states without SDR; during the last presidential election, it was 4.5 percentage points higher. Additionally, academic experts have found that SDR increases youth voter turnout by between 3.1 percentage points and 7.3 percentage points.<sup>7</sup> Given these findings:

- During the 2022 general election, **1.6 million North Carolinians** voted on Election Day—41 percent of all voters who cast a ballot.<sup>8</sup> That means 1.6 million voters who could have had access to SDR with the passage of the FTVA did not. The FTVA would ensure that all eligible North Carolina citizens would be able to register at the polls or update their voter registration information at the polls on Election Day.
- Likely more than **1 million North Carolina voters** will also not have access to SDR on Election Day for the 2024 general election.

## Ballot drop boxes

The FTVA would ensure North Carolinians have access to ballot drop boxes 24 hours per day, 7 days per week in order to efficiently, cost effectively, and securely return mail-in ballots. In states that allow all voters to request a mail-in ballot and provide drop boxes, on average, 27.9 percent of mail-in ballots are returned by drop box. Given the requirement for drop boxes in the FTVA, CAP analysis finds that:

- At least **102 drop boxes** would be available to voters across North Carolina, including some 24/7 drop-boxes.
- Approximately **130,000 North Carolina voters** would likely return their ballot to a drop box.

## Endnotes

- 1 Greta Bedekovics, "Pass the Freedom to Vote Act: How Elections Would Look Different This Year and in the Future" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2024), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/pass-the-freedom-to-vote-act-how-elections-would-look-different-this-year-and-in-the-future/>; Freedom to Vote Act, S. 2747, 117th Cong., 1st sess. (September 14, 2021), available at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/2747>.
- 2 Ballotpedia, "Presidential election in North Carolina, 2016," available at [https://ballotpedia.org/Presidential\\_election\\_in\\_North\\_Carolina\\_2016](https://ballotpedia.org/Presidential_election_in_North_Carolina_2016) (last accessed October 2024); Ballotpedia, "Presidential election in North Carolina, 2020," available at [https://ballotpedia.org/North\\_Carolina\\_election\\_results\\_2020](https://ballotpedia.org/North_Carolina_election_results_2020) (last accessed October 2024); Ballotpedia, "United States Senate election in North Carolina, 2022," available at [https://ballotpedia.org/United\\_States\\_Senate\\_election\\_in\\_North\\_Carolina\\_2022](https://ballotpedia.org/United_States_Senate_election_in_North_Carolina_2022) (last accessed October 2024).
- 3 National Conference of State Legislatures, "Automatic Voter Registration," available at <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/automatic-voter-registration> (last accessed October 2024); Movement Advancement Project, "Automatic Voter Registration," available at [https://www.lgbtmap.org/democracy-maps/automatic\\_voter\\_registration](https://www.lgbtmap.org/democracy-maps/automatic_voter_registration) (last accessed October 2024).
- 4 North Carolina was excluded from analyses/projections used in the full report for SDR because it offers more limited same-day voter registration opportunities. See Ballotpedia, "Same-day voter registration," available at [https://ballotpedia.org/Same-day\\_voter\\_registration](https://ballotpedia.org/Same-day_voter_registration) (last accessed October 2024).
- 5 Jacob M. Grumbach and Charlotte Hill, "Rock the Registration: Same Day Registration Increases Turnout of Young Voters," *The Journal of Politics* 84 (1) (2022): 405–417, available at <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/714776?journalCode=jop>; Paul Taylor and others, "American Mobility: Who Moves? Who Stays Put? Where's Home?" (Washington: Pew Research Center, 2008), available at <https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2010/10/Movers-and-Stayers.pdf>; Hire A Helper, "32+ Key Moving Statistics You Should Know in 2023," available at <https://www.hireahelper.com/moving-statistics/> (last accessed October 2024); U.S. Census Bureau, "Current Population Survey Data Tables, 2022," available at [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/data/tables.2022.List\\_1020932829.html#list-tab-List\\_1020932829](https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/data/tables.2022.List_1020932829.html#list-tab-List_1020932829) (last accessed October 2024).
- 6 Michael Waldman, "Mass Purges are the New Voter Suppression," Brennan Center for Justice, March 12, 2024, available at <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/mass-purges-are-new-voter-suppression>; Megan Henry, "Ohio's voter purge 'disproportionately targets voters of color', civil rights organizations say," *Ohio Capital Journal*, July 25, 2024, available at <https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2024/07/25/ohios-voter-purge-disproportionately-targets-voters-of-color-civil-rights-organizations-say/>.
- 7 Grumbach and Hill, "Rock the Registration: Same Day Registration Increases Turnout of Young Voters."
- 8 U.S. Election Assistance Commission, "Election Administration and Voting Survey 2022 Comprehensive Report" (Washington: 2023), available at [https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/2022\\_EAVS\\_Report\\_508c.pdf](https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/2022_EAVS_Report_508c.pdf).