

Wisconsin on Offense

The Path Forward to Strengthen Our Elections

Wisconsin's elections follow a rigorous system of checks and balances that ensures every election is free, fair, and secure. In recent years, however, we've seen bad actors exploit weaknesses in state law — fueling misinformation, legal battles, and spurious attempts to overturn the will of the voters.

This factsheet outlines three commonsense policy solutions that Wisconsin lawmakers and election administrators can consider to close those gaps — before and after Election Day. For a deeper dive into the national context and proven solutions, see our full report, "[States on Offense: The Path Forward to Strengthen Our Elections.](#)" For more information, please [contact us](#).

This resource is strictly nonpartisan and for educational use only. It is 501(c)(3) compliant and is not intended for any partisan, political, or electioneering activities.

Wisconsin Elections By the Numbers

Registered Voters: 3,933,068¹

Voter Turnout (Registered Voters %): 2022 [73 %] 2024 [87 %]²

Voting Methods (Election Day/Early In-Person/Mail %): 2022: 71%;12%;16%; 2024: 54%/28%/17%³

Recent Attempts to Exploit Election Vulnerabilities:

- [Experts Raise Concerns About Vote Counting Delays in Wisconsin](#)
- [State Supreme Court Reverses Earlier Ruling on Ballot Drop Boxes](#)

¹ 2024 EAVS Report, p. 6, Appendix A: Descriptive Tables, Executive Summary Table 1: 2024 EAVS at a Glance. Listed number reflects the number of registered voters for the 2024 November general election.

² 2022 EAVS Report, p. 6, Appendix A: Descriptive Tables, Overview Table 1: 2022 EAVS at a Glance; 2024 EAVS Report, p. 6, Appendix A: Descriptive Tables, Executive Summary Table 1: 2024 EAVS at a Glance.

³ *Id.*

Three Fixes for Stronger Wisconsin Elections

1	Speed up election results reporting and increase confidence in election results by enacting absentee ballot pre-processing.
2	Eliminate voter confusion and reduce litigation by providing clear statutory guidance on the process for fixing mistakes on ballots and alternative ballot return locations.
3	Maintain accurate voter rolls by enhancing data sharing between election officials and state agencies.

Fix #1: Speed Up Election Results Reporting to Boost Voter Confidence

Absentee ballot pre-processing – allowing election officials at least one day before Election Day to process absentee ballots and prepare them for counting – would speed up reporting and boost voter confidence in the results.

Wisconsin is one of a few states that does not allow election officials to begin processing absentee ballots before Election Day, though voters return them well before then. This denies Wisconsin's election officials the opportunity to use the days leading up to the election to verify and prepare ballots for counting once polls close. Limiting all of this work to Election Day itself can delay the reporting of results and lead to baseless speculation about election irregularities. It also leaves more time for mis/disinformation to spread while Wisconsinites await results in close races.

Fix #2: Reduce Voter Confusion and Litigation

Offering voters uniform standards and opportunities to correct errors on their ballot certificates, as well as reliable, secure ballot return options, would increase voter confidence and ensure every eligible vote is counted.

Wisconsin statutes are currently unclear about how eligible voters may correct (“cure”) minor errors on their absentee ballot certificates to make sure they are counted. Likewise, voters face confusion about the availability of secure alternative ballot return options, which is of increasing importance due to growing concerns about the reliability of mail service. This lack of clarity has led to substantial litigation in both pre- and post-election periods, contributing to voter confusion and threatening to invalidate legitimate ballots. Additionally,

although state officials offer a rudimentary form of absentee ballot tracking through their state website, lawmakers can enhance ballot tracking by incorporating easily accessible features into state law to increase transparency for voters and election officials.

Fix #3: Improve Data-Sharing to Keep Voter Rolls Accurate

Lawmakers can improve data sharing among state agencies to ensure voter lists remain up to date.

Unlike election officials in other states, local Wisconsin election officials lack access to the depth of accurate and up-to-date information that state agencies can provide to keep voter rolls as clean as possible. This is due, in part, to the fact that Wisconsin is exempt from National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) requirements. Lawmakers can provide local officials with the same access to comprehensive, up-to-date data from sources like the Division of Motor Vehicles that election officials in other states use to maintain accurate voter lists.

Secure Democracy Foundation is a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization building stronger elections, state by state. Our work is state-focused, informed by election policy insights from a national perspective, and realized by seizing common ground.