



## The United States Department of Justice

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### **JUSTICE DEPARTMENT RELEASES INFORMATION ON ELECTION DAY EFFORTS TO PROTECT THE RIGHT TO VOTE AND PROSECUTE BALLOT FRAUD**

WASHINGTON - Continuing a longstanding Justice Department tradition, Attorney General William P. Barr today issued the following statement: “Americans have the opportunity once again to help shape the future of this nation by exercising their right to vote. It is a right that forms the foundation of our democratic system of government, and is precious to all Americans. The Department of Justice will work tirelessly alongside other federal, state, and local agencies to protect that right as it is administered by state and local jurisdictions across the nation.”

In anticipation of the upcoming general elections, the Department of Justice today provided information about its particular efforts, through the Criminal Division, Civil Rights Division, and National Security Division, to ensure that all qualified voters have the opportunity to cast their ballots and have their votes counted free of discrimination, intimidation, or fraud in the election process.

#### **Criminal Division and the Department’s 94 U.S. Attorney’s Offices:**

The department’s Criminal Division oversees the enforcement of federal laws that criminalize certain forms of election fraud and vindicate the integrity of the federal election process.

The Criminal Division’s Public Integrity Section and the department’s 94 U.S. Attorney’s Offices are responsible for enforcing the federal criminal laws that prohibit various forms of election fraud, such as destruction of ballots, vote-buying, multiple voting, submission of fraudulent ballots or registrations, and alteration of votes, and malfeasance by postal or election officials and employees. The Criminal Division is also responsible for enforcing federal criminal law prohibiting voter intimidation for reasons other than race, color, national origin, or religion (as noted below, voter intimidation that has a basis in race, color, national origin, or religion is addressed by the Civil Rights Division).

The U.S. Attorney’s Offices around the country designate Assistant U.S. Attorneys who serve as District Election Officers (DEOs) in the respective Districts. DEOs

are responsible for overseeing potential election-crime matters in their Districts, and for coordinating with the department's election-crime experts in Washington, D.C.

From now through Nov. 3, 2020, the U.S. Attorney's Offices will work with specially trained FBI personnel in each district to ensure that complaints from the public involving possible election fraud are handled appropriately. Specifically:

- In consultation with federal prosecutors at the Public Integrity Section in Washington, D.C., the District Election Officers in U.S. Attorney's Offices, FBI officials at headquarters in Washington, D.C., and FBI special agents serving as Election Crime Coordinators in the FBI's 56 field offices will be on duty while polls are open to receive complaints from the public.
- Election-crime complaints should be directed to the local U.S. Attorney's Offices or the local FBI office. A list of U.S. Attorney's Offices and their telephone numbers can be found at <http://www.justice.gov/usao/districts/>. A list of FBI offices and accompanying telephone numbers can be found at [www.fbi.gov/contact-us](http://www.fbi.gov/contact-us).
- Public Integrity Section prosecutors are available to consult and coordinate with the U.S. Attorney's Offices and the FBI regarding the handling of election-crime allegations.

All complaints related to violence, threats of violence, or intimidation at a polling place should be reported first to local police authorities by calling 911; after alerting local law enforcement to such emergencies by calling 911, the public should contact the department.

### **Civil Rights Division:**

The department's Civil Rights Division is responsible for ensuring compliance with the civil provisions of federal statutes that protect the right to vote, and with the criminal provisions of federal statutes prohibiting discriminatory interference with that right.

The Civil Rights Division's Voting Section enforces the civil provisions of a wide range of federal statutes that protect the right to vote including: the Voting Rights Act; the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act; the National Voter Registration Act; the Help America Vote Act; and the Civil Rights Acts. Among other things, collectively, these laws:

- Prohibit election practices that have either a discriminatory purpose or a discriminatory result on account of race, color, or language minority status;
- Prohibit intimidation of voters;

- Provide that voters who need assistance in voting because of disability or illiteracy can obtain assistance from a person of their choice (other than agents of their employer or union);
- Provide for accessible voting systems for voters with disabilities;
- Provide for provisional ballots for voters who assert they are registered and eligible, but whose names do not appear on poll books;
- Provide for absentee voting for absent uniformed service members, their family members, and U.S. citizens living abroad; and
- Provide for covered States to offer citizens the opportunity to register to vote through offices that provide driver licenses, public assistance, and disability services, as well as through the mail; and to take steps regarding maintaining voter registration lists.

The Civil Rights Division's Disability Rights Section enforces the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that prohibits discrimination in voting based on disability.

The Civil Rights Division's Criminal Section enforces federal criminal statutes that prohibit voter intimidation and vote suppression based on race, color, national origin, or religion.

On Election Day, Nov. 3, 2020, the Civil Rights Division will implement a comprehensive program to help ensure the right to vote that will include the following:

- The Civil Rights Division will conduct monitoring in the field under the federal voting rights statutes.
- Civil Rights Division attorneys in the Voting, Disability Rights, and Criminal Sections in Washington, D.C., will be ready to receive complaints of potential violations relating to any of the statutes the Civil Rights Division enforces. Attorneys in the division will coordinate within the Department of Justice and will take appropriate action concerning these complaints before, during, and after Election Day.
- Individuals with complaints related to possible violations of the federal voting rights laws can call the department's toll-free telephone line at 800-253-3931, and also can submit complaints through a link on the department's website, at <https://civilrights.justice.gov/>.
- Individuals with questions or complaints related to the ADA may call the Justice Department's toll-free ADA information line at 800-514-0301 or 800-514-0383 (TDD), or submit a complaint through a link on the department's ADA website, at [ada.gov](https://ada.gov).
- Once again, complaints related to violence, threats of violence, or intimidation at a polling place should always be reported immediately to

local authorities by calling 911. They should also be reported to the department after local authorities are contacted.

**National Security Division:**

The department's National Security Division supervises the investigation and prosecution of cases affecting or relating to national security, including any cases involving foreign interference in elections or violent extremist threats to elections. In this context:

- The National Security Division's Counterintelligence and Export Control Section oversees matters involving a range of malign influence activities that foreign governments may attempt, including computer hacking of election or campaign infrastructure; covert information operations (e.g., to promulgate disinformation through social media); covert efforts to support or denigrate political candidates or organizations; and other covert influence operations that might violate various criminal statutes.
- The National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section oversees matters involving international and domestic terrorism and supports law enforcement in preventing any acts of terrorism that impact Americans, including any violent extremism that might threaten election security.

As in past elections, on Nov. 3, 2020, the National Security Division will work closely with counterparts at the FBI and our U.S. Attorney's Offices to protect our nation's elections from any national security threats. In particular, attorneys from both sections will be partnered with FBI Headquarters components to provide support to U.S. Attorney's Offices and FBI Field Offices to counter any such threats. Again, complaints related to violence, threats of violence, or intimidation at a polling place should always be reported immediately to local authorities by calling 911 and, after local authorities are contacted, then should also be reported to the department.

Both protecting the right to vote and combating election fraud are essential to maintaining the confidence of all Americans in our democratic system of government. The department encourages anyone with information suggesting voting rights concerns or ballot fraud to contact the appropriate authorities, and notes in particular that the Department of Homeland Security plays its own important role in safeguarding critical election infrastructure from cyber and other threats.

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The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the Department of Justice. Learn more about the history of our agency at [www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years](http://www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years).