

Educating and persuading public officials

Communicating Trusted Election Information
June 14, 2022

Housekeeping

- We appreciate your patience if any technical difficulties come up during the presentation
- Use the **chat panel** to say hello, chat with other attendees, and ask questions

Our objectives

- Confidently inform policymakers about how you administer elections
- Establish and maintain trusted relationships with public officials
- Get involved in initiatives advancing practical and voter-centric policies

Our agenda

- Introduction (5 minutes)
- Why your voice is important (5 minutes)
- Building relationships with public officials (10 minutes)
- Building relationships with allies (20 minutes)
 - Case study
- Working with the media (5 minutes)
- Breakout session (20 minutes)
- Election infrastructure initiative (10 minutes)
- Q&A and wrap up (15 minutes)

Hello, there!



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Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL)

National, nonpartisan, nonprofit
harnessing the promise of
technology to modernize the
American voting experience

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www.techandciviclife.org

“Communicating Trusted Election Information” training series

- **NEW:** Educating and persuading public officials
- **NEW:** Working with the media
- Improving your election website
- Accessible communication for election offices
- Social media for voter engagement
- Combating election misinformation

Poll

How confident do you feel educating and persuading public officials?

Why has this become even more important now?

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR VOICE



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Establishing your credibility

You are:

- An election official
- A community leader
- A source of truth
- Steward of democracy
- An expert



Spurred by election misinformation and skepticism, crowd urges N.H. lawmakers to outlaw ballot-counting machines

New Hampshire Public Radio | By Casey McDermott
Published January 14, 2022 at 1:34 PM EST



N.H. House Livestream / YouTube

Secretary of State Dave Scanlan did not take a formal position on the bill but did stress that New Hampshire's vote-counting devices have proven accurate — and humans can be prone to error.

Source: "Spurred by election misinformation and skepticism, crowd urges N.H. lawmakers to outlaw ballot-counting machines," NHPR 2022

Election workers faced new threats after 2020 election. Experts fear it will drive them away



Feds accuse Texas man of posting election threats

The Justice Department says a Texas man has been arrested on charges he posted threatening messages online about killing officials in Georgia after the 2020 election. (Jan. 21) AP

Rick Rouan and Deborah Barfield Berry USA TODAY

Published 7:01 a.m. ET Feb. 7, 2022

Source: "Election workers faced new threats after 2020 election. Experts fear it will drive them away," USA Today 2022

Colorado election workers could soon get new protections against threats, doxxing

House Bill 1273 would make it a crime to threaten an election worker in an attempt to prevent them from doing their job or in response to them performing official duties



Jesse Paul 3:45 AM MST on Mar 3, 2022

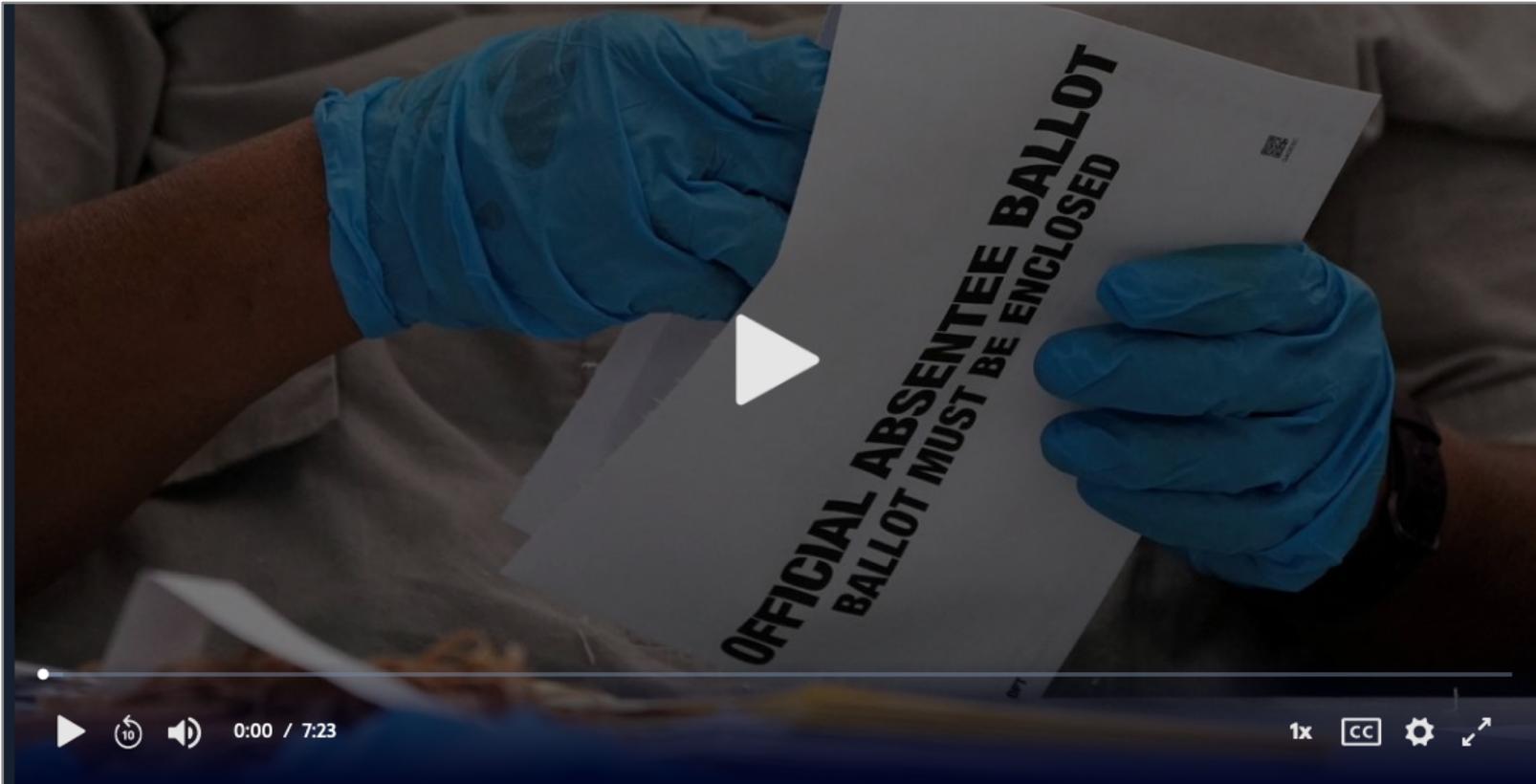


Election officials collect ballots out of a ballot box in Gunnison County. Voters turned out for early voting in the parking lot of the Blackstock Government Building on Oct. 19, 2020. (Dean Krakel, Special to The Colorado Sun)

Source: "Colorado election workers could soon get new protections against threats, doxxing," The Colorado Sun 2022

South Carolina governor signs election legislation, other bills





Maine passes law protecting poll workers facing increased threats since the 2020 election

Apr 13, 2022 6:35 PM EDT



Government

Politics

Framingham City Clerk Requests To Move Polling Place From McCarthy Elementary School

📅 January 31, 2022 👤 editor 📍 District 5, District 7, Farley Administration Building, Framingham City Clerk Lisa Ferguson,

Source: "Framingham City Clerk Request To Move Polling Place From McCarthy Elementary School," Framingham Source 2022

Educating and persuading

Educating

Providing information to public officials that allows them to be better informed about election administration

Persuading

Motivating public officials to support your stance or move them towards neutrality

How can you build and maintain meaningful relationships?

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUBLIC OFFICIALS



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Who should I contact?

- Start at home
- Consider the spectrum
 - Aligned with your goals, vs
 - Resistant to your goals
- “Who is the right person that will support my efforts?”

Initial contact

- Position yourself as an expert
- Invite a connection
- Solve a problem

Office tours

- Begin building a trusted relationship
- Help educate public officials about your work
- Interaction outside of the legislative process

Voter Reform is Underway in the Territory for 2022

By Adisha Penn - January 5, 2022

Like 0



From left, Senator Donna Frett-Gregory, Congressman Rodney Davis, and Senator Alma Heyliger-Francis meet to discuss voter reform in the territory. (Photo submitted by Jamila A. Russell)

Source: "Voter Reform is Underway in the Territory for 2022," The St. John Source 2022

A snapshot from Ohio

Time	Location and topic
9:00-9:15	Arrive, welcome, introduction of staff/board members
9:15-9:20	Front desk/check in area <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Points of emphasis include bipartisan staffing of customer service, and physical security of board offices• Highlight recent investments in physical security, drop boxes, etc.
9:20-9:35	Absentee voting department/ballot processing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasize bipartisan nature of processing requests and ballots, show software or other forms your teams use when validating requests and ballots• Discuss checks and balances associated with absentee voting and share statistics from your county concerning absentee ballot utilization

Show and tell

What they're interested in	What to show them
Security and chain of custody	Chain of custody documentation, ballot boxes/bags and seals, process for checking seals
Cybersecurity	Air-gapped machines not connected to the internet
Reliability of voting machines	Logic and accuracy testing
Trust in the results	Post-election audit documents and procedures (walk them through the process step by step)

Other ways to connect

- Coffee or lunch
- Voter open houses
 - Logic and accuracy testing
- Candidate filing day

Maintain open communication

- Consider adding public officials to your press releases
- Be proactive about reaching out with good and bad news
- Solicit a commendation for a poll worker or staff member

Positive outcomes in Indiana

Statewide listening tour

Indiana Secretary of State Holli Sullivan visits Monticello

By MICHAEL JOHNSON editor@thehj.com Mar 9, 2022

FEATURED

Secretary of State Visits Randolph County Clerk's Office

BY SCOTT SHAFFER, News-Gazette Features Editor Mar 3, 2022

Who can help support your efforts?

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALLIES



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Collaborating with interested organizations

- Local community and interest groups
- State-focused organizations
- National initiatives

Partnerships with state associations

- Offer training and strategy
- Serve as a focal point
- Maintain ongoing committees

Lobbyists

- Typically part-time
- Experienced working with elected officials in your state or region
- Track proposed statutory changes to give you a heads up about what legislators are thinking about
- Coordinate education and persuasion campaigns for associations that connect decision makers with election officials

County clerk modernization bills

CASE STUDY: KENTUCKY COUNTY CLERK'S ASSOCIATION



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The problem

- Goals of the County Clerk Modernization bill
- Played defense during the legislative process
- Surprise bills showed up on the deadline
- No access to key players within the legislature

The process

- Interim task force for County Clerk Modernization
- Developing a game plan
- Building foundational understanding
- Local voices matter
- Finding ways to work with legislators



The outcomes

County clerk modernization bill passes Senate

SB 135, sponsored by Sen. Jason Howell, seeks to accelerate the online availability of recorded instruments such as titles, deeds and mortgages. The legislation would amend state statute to designate 90 percent of funds held for the local records grant program be set aside and distributed as grants for county clerks, and that the \$10 storage fee collected by county clerks shall be held for the exclusive purpose of providing funding for the permanent storage of recorded instruments.

The bill would appropriate \$25 million from the state general fund to the Department of Local Government to provide grants to county clerks to establish and maintain portals for the electronic filing and searching of recorded instruments. It would also create an addition to state statute to allow for county clerks in counties with a population of less than 70,000 to receive an advancement to defray necessary official expenses.

Source: "Week 8 of the legislative session concludes," Kentucky Association of Counties 2022

Recommendations for you

- Start today
- Preparation work is crucial
- Have allyship with legislators who will champion bills
- Advocacy committee
- Engage legislators outside of the capitol

Persuasive letters to state legislators

- Examples of topics
 - Election worker protection
 - Infrastructure funding
 - Early voting policies
 - Post-election audits

Letter from Michigan clerks

DETROIT

Michigan clerks ask lawmakers for early voting, other changes ahead of 2022 elections



Clara Hendrickson

Detroit Free Press

Published 5:55 p.m. ET Feb. 28, 2022 | Updated 6:21 p.m. ET Feb. 28, 2022

Source: "Michigan clerks ask lawmakers for early voting, other changes ahead of 2022 elections," Detroit Free Press 2022

Written testimony

- Basic structure
 - Intro: Provide context
 - Paragraph 1: State your position clearly
 - Paragraph 2: Diagnose the problem
 - Paragraph 3: Offer a solution
 - Paragraph 4: Provide a recap

Verbal testimony

- Steps to prepare
 - Practice, practice, practice
 - Research public hearing days and guidelines
 - Arrive early
 - Be prepared to answer questions accurately
 - Be confident – you are the expert!

Making the case publicly

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA



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Reach public officials where they read

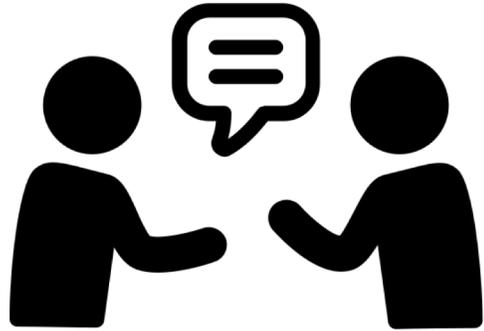
- Coverage of elections
 - raises awareness of key issues
 - highlights expert opinions (like yours)
 - points toward solutions

How it works



- A reporter calls you about an issue making headlines in your area, state, or across the country
 - Ex. Long lines in primaries in other states

How it works



- You offer a few, short thoughts to help the journalist understand the context of the issue
 - Ex. This type of issue occurs due to a lack of resources for more polling locations, poll workers, and equipment

How it works



- Let voters know how you're approaching the issue locally and point toward a solution
 - Ex. "We've hired more poll workers, and our voters can help out by applying to fill those roles. However, more funding from the state would help us open more polling locations and decrease lines on Election Day."

Blending professional experience with personal stories

People tend to gravitate towards the personal, lived experiences of others. Find a way to combine your expertise as an election official, and your personal stories.

Drafting an Op-Ed

COLUMNS | Opinion *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

Op-Ed: State, local leaders a firewall against attacks on democracy

By Debbie Cox Bultan and Ken Lawrence
Published 4:34 p.m. ET May 28, 2022

[View Comments](#)    

Source: "State, local leaders a firewall against attacks on democracy," Courier Times 2022

Practice drafting an op-ed

BREAKOUT SESSION



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OP ED | Opinion *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

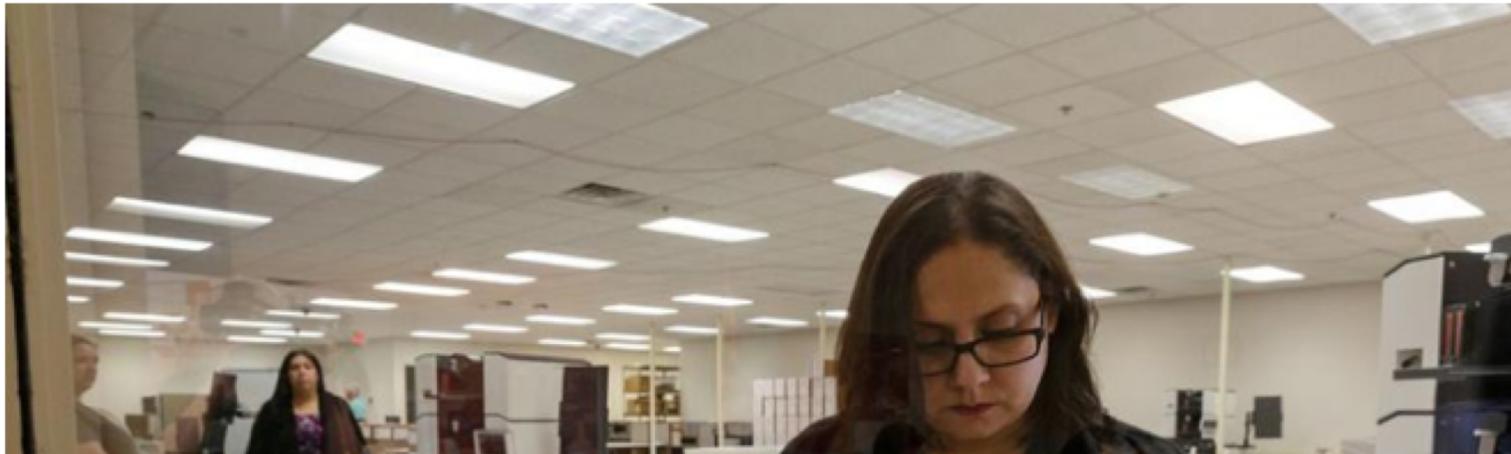
We run elections in Arizona. An all-mail option for 2020 wouldn't ruin the process

Opinion: We represent elections officials in all 15 Arizona counties. And we'd like to set the record straight on the impact of all-mail elections.

Virginia Ross and Lisa Marra opinion contributors

Published 6:00 a.m. MT April 8, 2020 | Updated 9:28 a.m. MT April 8, 2020

[View Comments](#)



Source: "We run elections in Arizona. An all-mail option for 2020 wouldn't ruin the process," azcentral 2020

Engaging first sentence – Catch the reader's attention

Opening paragraph – Express a clear, singular topic that is the primary focus of your op-ed

Body Paragraphs – Short paragraphs (2-5 sentences)

- Have one point per paragraph
- Develop your story
- Back your main thesis
- Identify and refute counterarguments
- Build support for your conclusion

Closing paragraph – Reiterate your main point and offer a final epiphany, solution, or call to action

Memorable final sentence – Stick in your readers' minds

First ingredients of a great op-ed

Your main point

What are you advocating for?

Our state should authorize election officials to start processing ballots 3 days before Election Day -- a standard approach called pre-canvassing -- so that results can be reported in a more timely manner.

Tell your story

What's happening in your community? Why should the reader -- **especially a public official** -- care?

In our county, rates of voting by mail have increased quickly, but state law hasn't kept up. During the 2020 General Election, our county's election results were delayed because state law didn't allow your public servants to count your vote efficiently.

Your credibility

What makes you an expert?

I've served as an election official for our county since 2006 in various roles. I hold a Certified Elections Registration Administrator designation from the Election Center, take ongoing professional development courses to keep my skills fresh, and serve as an officer for our state election association.

Try it yourself (10 mins.)

Your main point

What are you advocating for?

1-2 sentences

Tell your story

What's happening in your community? Why should the reader -- **especially a public official** -- care?

1-2 sentences

Your credibility

What makes you an expert?

1-2 sentences

Report back (5 mins.)

How did it go?

- What was the hardest part of that?
- What topic did you write about?
- How did you anticipate the reader's perspective?
- How did you make the ideas understandable?

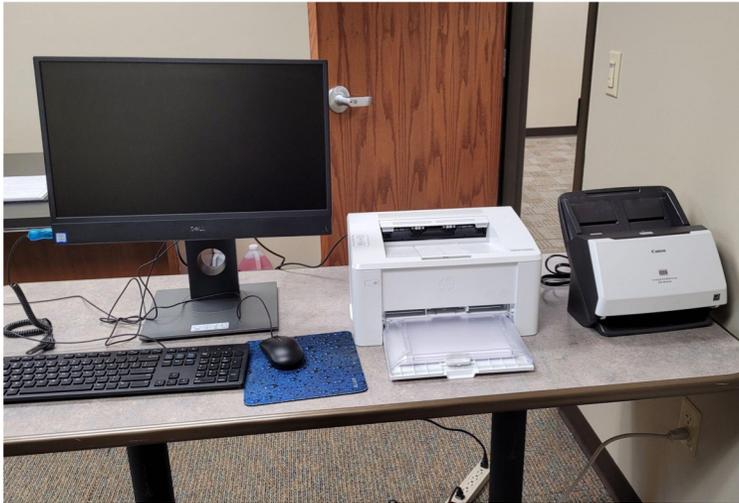
An example at the federal level

ELECTION INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVE



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2020: A heroic year for US election officials

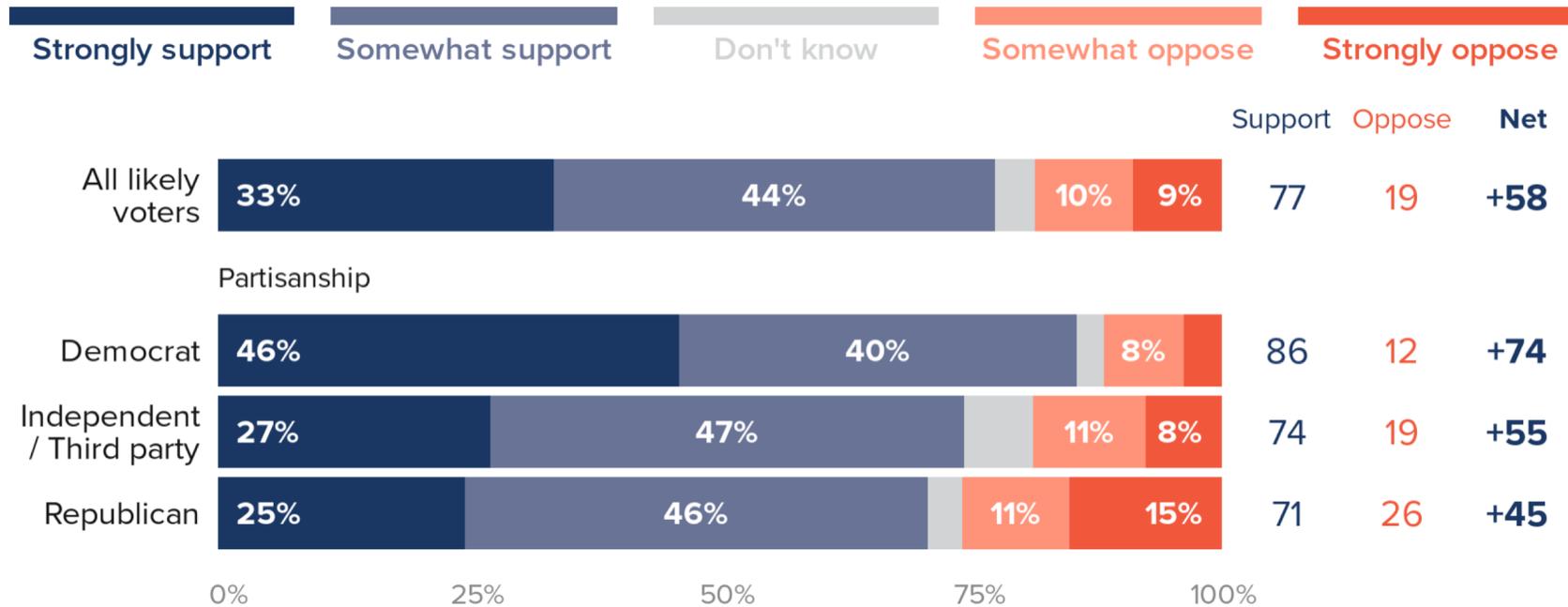


**GOAL: \$20 billion in additional,
predictable federal funding for US
election administration over 10
years**



**ELECTION
INFRASTRUCTURE
INITIATIVE**

77% percent of voters nationally support investing in election infrastructure



March 4-8, 2022 survey of 2,972 likely voters. Source: Data for Progress and the Election Infrastructure Initiative.

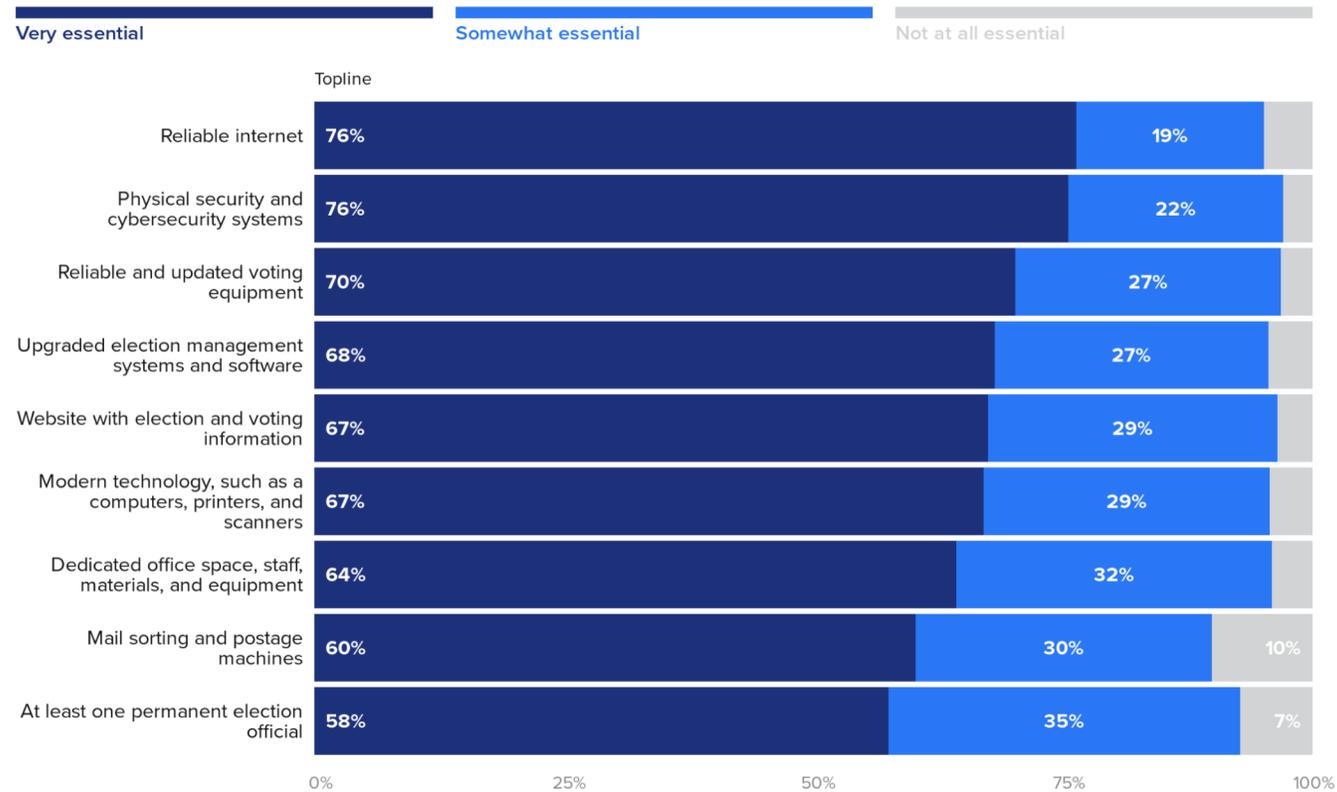
A bipartisan majority of voters support federal investments in election infrastructure

<i>Funding Election Infrastructure</i>	<i>Support-Oppose</i>
<i>All Registered Voters</i>	80%-10%
Independent Voters	76%-13%
Moderate Voters	82%-8%
Suburban Voters	80%-11%
White Suburban Women	87%-6%
Independent Women	78%-6%
Hispanic/Latino Voters	73%-10%

A bipartisan majority of voters support federal investments in election infrastructure

<i>Funding Election Infrastructure</i>	<i>Support-Oppose</i>
<i>All GOP Primary Voters</i>	74%-14%
Strong Republicans	69%-17%
Very Conservative Republicans	64%-20%
Strong Trump Supporters	71%-16%

The majority of likely voters see an array of election resources as essential



March 4-8, 2022 survey of 2,972 likely voters. Source: Data for Progress and the Election Infrastructure Initiative.

Persuading public officials with 50 op-eds from local election officials

- Tailored support for writing your letter and getting it published

Let's talk

DISCUSSION



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Next steps

- Identify key public officials and find their contact information
- Start building relationships with public officials through an informal call or email
- Highlight times in our election calendar when we could include public officials
- Use the template agenda to host an office tour
- Reach out to my state association's legislative committee to see how I can help
- Finish drafting op-ed components

Share your thoughts

- What resonated with you from today's course? (Any "ah-ha" moments?)
- What are your next steps?
- What questions do you have about what we covered today?

As questions come up for you ...

- Reach out to CTCL
 - We'll help out, or
 - We'll find someone for you who can

[Hello@TechAndCivicLife.org](mailto>Hello@TechAndCivicLife.org)

We've covered a lot of ground

WRAPPING UP



CENTER FOR
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New Trainings: Communicating Trusted Election Information



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Educating and persuading public officials

Tuesday, June 14th at 1:00pm CT

Working with the media

Thursday, June 16th at 1:00pm CT

TechAndCivicLife.org/course/trusted-info



What was your experience with today's course?

- A brief survey is linked in the chat box
- Please complete the survey now to provide feedback and improve the course for future participants

Thanks!

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