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Voting  
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Institute

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# ACRU Election Integrity Bulletin

## LEAD STORY

### Bernie Sanders Says States Should Allow Felons to Vote From Behind Bars

While Iowa struggles on whether to restore voting rights to felons who have completed their prison sentences, Sen. Bernie Sanders said people convicted of felonies should never lose access to the ballot box in the first place. At a town hall meeting in Muscatine's West Middle School gymnasium Saturday, the Vermont senator was asked whether the imprisoned should have the right to vote. Only his home state and Maine allow felons to vote from behind bars. "I think that is absolutely the direction we should go," he said.

<https://bit.ly/2VsyiO7>

## FEDERAL

### Trump Warns GOP Should Be 'Paranoid' About Elections as States Spend Millions to Boost Voter Confidence

As President Donald Trump warns Republicans to be "a little bit more paranoid" about how votes are counted, states are spending millions in federal money to buy new voting machines, hire cybersecurity experts and update voting-registration systems. Republicans and Democrats in Congress agreed last year to give states \$380 million to improve the nation's elections systems with the aim

of building voter trust in the process. Trump said Tuesday that he's concerned votes would be counted unfairly and in favor of Democratic candidates. "We have to be a little bit careful because I don't like the way the votes are being tallied," Trump said in an address to the National Republican Congressional Committee.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/04/04/donald-trump-tells-gop-paranoid-elections-states-push-back/3358112002/>

## SCOTUS Blog: Only in America

Foreign observers must be shaking their heads in disbelief that adding a citizenship question to the U.S. census has proved so controversial as to result in litigation. *Department of Commerce v. New York* will be argued before the U.S. Supreme Court on April 23. Predicting how the court will rule is always dicey. What is odd about the challenge by blue states and liberal advocacy organizations is that even the United Nations—an institution they often hold up as a model of progressivism that the United States should emulate—sides with the Trump administration on this issue. In its 2017 "Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses," the U.N. recommends that member countries ask census questions identifying both an individual's country of birth and country of citizenship.

<https://www.scotusblog.com/2019/04/symposium-only-in-america/>

(more)

## ***The National Review: What the Electoral College Saves Us From***

The latest enthusiasm from progressive pundits and activists for replacing the American system of self-government is to abolish the Electoral College and choose presidents by national popular vote. As with all such enthusiasms—expanding the Supreme Court, abolishing the filibuster and the Senate itself, lowering the voting age to 16, letting convicted felons and illegal aliens vote, adding D.C. and Puerto Rico as states, automatic voter registration, abolishing voter ID, etc.—the scarcely concealed argument is that changing the rules will help Democrats and progressives win more.

<https://www.nationalreview.com/2019/04/what-the-electoral-college-saves-us-from/>

## ***The Monitor: Third Court Rules Against Citizenship Question in 2020 Census***

A third judge has ruled that adding a citizenship question to the 2020 census would be unconstitutional, according to court records. In a nearly 120-page opinion filed Friday, U.S. District Judge George Hazel ruled the question's inclusion on the coming census would be unlawful. More than a month after closing arguments were held in the federal trial related to the 2020 Census, the court ruled against the defendants, which included the U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, who oversees the bureau.

<https://www.themonitor.com/2019/04/05/third-court-rules-citizenship-question-2020-census/>

## **STATES**

### **California: Vote Provisionally in November 2018? Your Ballot Was Probably Counted**

Nine in 10 provisional ballots cast in California during last November's election were accepted, dispelling the notion that those ballots, given to voters with eligibility questions, don't count,

according to state election officials. Also, about 58,000 Californians—just under 11,000 of them from Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties—took advantage of the state's first-ever offer of late voter registration in the Nov. 6 general election, Secretary of State Alex Padilla's office reported.

<https://www.pe.com/2019/04/03/vote-provisionally-in-november-2018-your-ballot-was-probably-counted/>

### **Colorado: Denver City Council Employee with History of Trouble Accused of Voter Registration Fraud**

The FOX31 Problem Solvers first investigated a Denver City Council policy analyst for using the city's affordable housing program to help himself. Now, Zachary Rothmier is accused of voter registration fraud.

<https://kdvr.com/2019/04/01/denver-city-council-employee-with-history-of-trouble-accused-of-voter-registration-fraud/>

### **Florida: Supervisors Support Elections Reform**

Florida's elections made headlines last year amid several hotly-contested races. Now the state house and senate are pushing bills to change the process for the future. Florida has a reputation for bungling elections. 2018 was no different, with reports of thousands of ballots not being counted along with several other issues being reported. "Specifically, a lot of it stems from issues of vote-by-mail ballots and the sheer volume of the vote-by-mail ballots that came in. And we believe that it is a structural issue the way they were doing vote-by-mail ballots the timing that they go out, the timing when they come back. Those are things that are easily fixable," said Rep. Blaise Ingoglia (R-Springhill).

<https://news.wjct.org/post/supervisors-support-elections-reform>

*(more)*

## Missouri: Bill Gives Subpoena Power to Secretary of State

The Missouri House has endorsed a bill that would give subpoena power to the Secretary of State to investigate alleged violations of election laws. The legislation, given initial approval Wednesday, would allow the Secretary of State to subpoena ballots, computer programs and other materials related to voting as part of an investigation into election law violations. Republican Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft already has authority to conduct election-related investigations, but not to issue subpoenas. Republican lawmakers who supported the legislation said subpoena power is necessary to effectively carry out those investigations.

<https://ktvo.com/news/local/missouri-bill-gives-subpoena-power-to-secretary-of-state-04-03-2019>

## Oregon: Salem Woman Arrested on 35 Counts of Election Fraud, Identity Theft

A Salem woman is being held on \$478,000 bail Thursday after being charged with 35 counts of making a false statement under election laws, aggravated identity theft and identity theft. Simone Thrasher, 23, a former paid circulator registered with Oregon Elections Division, is accused of making false statements, oaths or affidavits on several signature sheets submitted in December 2015. She also used the personal identification of at least 15 people on the petitions with the intent to deceive and defraud, according to court records.

<https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/news/crime/2019/04/05/salem-woman-election-fraud-identity-theft/3369814002/>

## Tennessee: Voter Registration Groups Could Face Fines for Too Many Incomplete Forms

In the lead up to last year's midterm election, efforts to register Tennesseans to vote led to a noticeable influx of applications—and eventually a legal challenge. In Shelby County, one organization turned in 10,000 forms on the final day of registration, according to Secretary of State Tre

Hargett. A similar significant increase in new voter registration was seen in Davidson County as well. But many of the registration forms contained incorrect or incomplete information, according to election officials. As a result, Hargett's office is behind a new bill that would require groups leading voter registration efforts to undergo training and potentially face fines for submitting too many incomplete forms.

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/politics/2019/04/02/tennessee-voter-registration-groups-could-face-fines-too-many-incomplete-forms-under-new-bill/3337072002/>

## Wisconsin: No Determination Yet on Drinks-for-Votes Complaint

No determination has been made yet regarding a sign posted that purported to offer free drinks to those who voted for certain candidates in Somers. Somers Town Chairman Mark Molinaro alerted the Wisconsin Elections Commission and the Kenosha County District Attorney's Office after seeking social media posts of the sign offering a free-drinks wristband in exchange for voting. The posts urged Somers residents to vote for Peter Gochis and Kevin Mathewson. It read: "Once you end up voting, send me a picture to verify you did and you will get a free wristband for tomorrow's party at Somers House. All help is greatly appreciated." Neither was elected. Molinaro said he made formal complaints to both the elections commission and the district attorney. "These actions are clearly violations of the election laws that are in place to safeguard against providing goods and services in exchange for votes," Molinaro wrote in his formal complaint.

<https://bit.ly/2Vt0VdY>

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**REDISTRICTING****Wisconsin: Conservative Claims Win in State Supreme Court Race, but Recount Likely**

A conservative former adviser to ex-Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker (R) claimed victory in a closely fought race for a state Supreme Court seat in Wisconsin early Wednesday, potentially cementing a Republican-leaning majority for years to come. With all but a small handful of precincts reporting, Judge Brian Hagedorn clung to a narrow 6,000-vote lead—or about four-tenths of a percentage point—over Judge Lisa Neubauer, the candidate backed by Wisconsin’s Democratic Party. The balance of power on the court has been crucial in a state where partisan fervor has risen to new heights. The conservative majority on the court upheld many of Walker’s top priorities over the last decade, and the next majority—whether liberal or conservative—is likely to decide contentious issues like redistricting. <https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/437100-conservative-claims-win-in-wisconsin-supreme-court-case-but-recount>

**Wisconsin: If Results Stand, Holder Loses Big in Wisconsin Election**

Wisconsin voters appear to have delivered a stunning rejection to former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder’s latest political objective, in a state that’s not only sure to be a 2020 election battleground, but also pivotal in the upcoming decennial redistricting process. A key race in that effort occurred April 2, when liberal-backed judge Lisa Neubauer faced conservative judge Brian Hagedorn for a seat on the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Despite overwhelming outside support for Neubauer, the election has Hagedorn leading by nearly 6,000 votes. Holder was unusually active, in what would seem an inconsequential race for President Obama’s former top law enforcement official. But he invested his time and reputation, as well as hundreds of thousands of donor dollars, in what looks to be another surprising Wisconsin defeat.

[https://www.theepochtimes.com/eric-holder-loses-big-in-wisconsin-battleground-election\\_2869410.html](https://www.theepochtimes.com/eric-holder-loses-big-in-wisconsin-battleground-election_2869410.html)