

H.R. ____, The Voter Empowerment Act of 2024

Overview

The Voter Empowerment Act of 2024 (VEA) protects and promotes the right to vote by modernizing our voter registration system and protecting access to the ballot box. The bill removes unnecessary barriers to voting – particularly for individuals with disabilities – and ensures consistency across the states.

Background

In recent years, many states have passed new voting restrictions – from limits on absentee ballots to voter ID requirements. These restrictions flow from the Supreme Court’s decision in *Shelby v. Holder* (2013) overturning preclearance requirements from the Voting Rights Act of 1965 – allowing states to pass restrictive voting legislation without federal oversight. Since then, states have passed [nearly 100 new restrictive voting laws](#), including 11 of the 13 states previously required to complete preclearance due to their history of discrimination.

Summary

The Voter Empowerment Act will:

- **Modernize and streamline voter registration.** The bill requires states to provide both *same-day* and *online registration* – including the option to update personal information online. States will also be required to automatically register voters whose information passes through another state or federal agency. (Voters will be notified and given the option to opt-out.)
- **Prohibit interference in voter registration.** The VEA prohibits anyone from hindering another person from registering to vote and prohibits *voter caging* – the practice of removing voters from voter rolls because mail sent to them was returned to sender.
- **Improve accessibility for individuals with disabilities.** The VEA requires a broad range of improvements to voter registration, polling places, and absentee voting to better accommodate individuals with disabilities.
- **Increase and protect access to the ballot box.** The bill establishes minimum requirements for early voting access, prevents states from adding extra conditions to absentee voting, and requires states to notify individuals when their polling place changes. It also allows a sworn written statement or student ID to fulfill state-mandated ID requirements. Further, the bill protects the right to vote for convicted criminals (unless actively serving a felony sentence) and requires states to notify individuals of their rights.

Impact

The Voter Empowerment Act of 2024 asserts the government’s responsibility for protecting the constitutional right to vote. This means ensuring all eligible voters are registered to vote *and* have access to the ballot box. This bill responds to recent state-level restrictions by improving and protecting voter registration for all voters, while addressing specific inequities experienced by individuals with disabilities.

###