



Bipartisan Policy Center

Improving the Voting Experience After 2020



National Conference of State Legislatures
Marci Andino

May 2022

BPC's Task Force on Elections

Established in 2018 on belief that bipartisan, evidence-based policy solutions to election challenges do exist.

Bridges the gap in state and federal policy by bringing in the voices of election officials.

Comprised of 26 state and local election officials from 18 states.

Learning from 2020

Logical Election Policy

January 2020

Set minimum standards and best practices for casting, counting, and registering to vote. Recommendations included:

Automatic and online voter registration

No-excuse absentee

7 days early voting

7 days pre-processing mail ballots

Improving the Voting Experience

April 2021

Incorporated lessons learned from 2020 election to include additional policy recommendations on:

Restricting last-minute election changes

Emergency and COOP planning

Protecting election officials

Flexible & responsive resource allocation

Recommendation 1

States should enact legislative or administrative changes to election procedures **more than 90-days before a general election.**

- Ideally, changes should be made **one-year before the general election.**
- States should **communicate to the public** changes to standing election procedures via all available means.





Recommendation 2

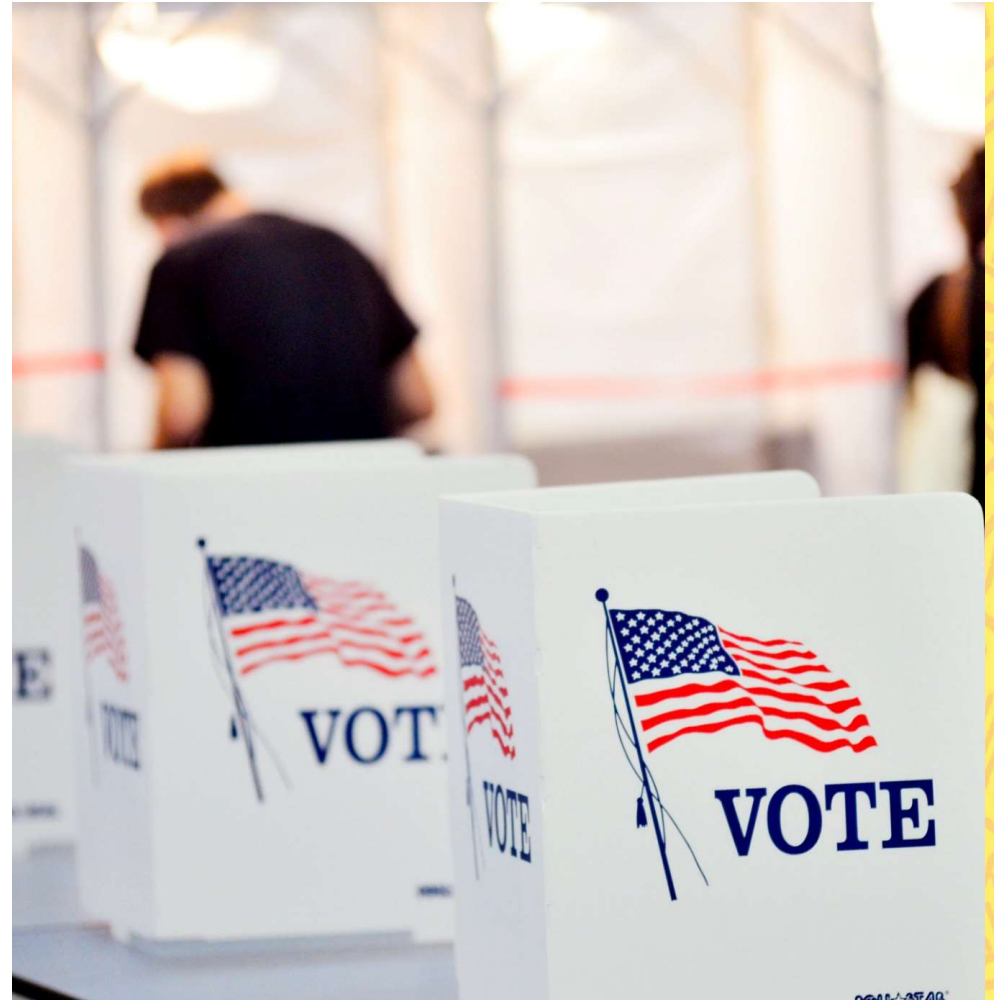
Challenges to standing election procedures within 90 days of an election should be **considered by courts only for future elections.**

- Courts must **disincentivize a late-litigation strategy** that creates a flurry of litigation near Election Day about voting procedures sometimes long in effect.

Recommendation 3

Courts should consider challenges to the merits of election administration changes in an election year on an **expedited basis**.

- Cases raised in the 90-day window should continue to be considered on an expedited basis, but **courts should be tactful** about when to implement changes to standing election laws.



Recommendation 4

No later than 60 days before an election, counties and states should **produce and publicly display** detailed observation procedures for the voting process, ballot reconciliation and canvass, recounts, and audits.





Recommendation 5

States should create emergency election procedures that include contingencies for weather, terrorism, or other disasters.

- States can proactively mitigate the chance of back-and-forth policy changes during an emergency with a detailed emergency response plan that clearly documents who has decision-making authority during an emergency.

Recommendation 6

States should require local election offices to **develop emergency election procedures** and submit them to the state for review and coordination.

- States should develop a **base template for an emergency plan** from which local election administrators can expand.



Recommendation 7

States should mandate voting systems that produce **voter-verifiable paper ballots**.

- The voter-verifiable ballot should be the **ballot of record** for any audit or recount.





Recommendation 8

States should standardize and simplify **ballot return deadlines**.

- Local and state officials should conduct **vigorous voter communication** efforts to educate voters about return deadlines.

Recommendation 9

States should expand the options for the return of vote-by-mail ballots to **include secure drop boxes.**

- States should help local jurisdictions offset the high upfront and **ongoing maintenance and security costs** associated with them.

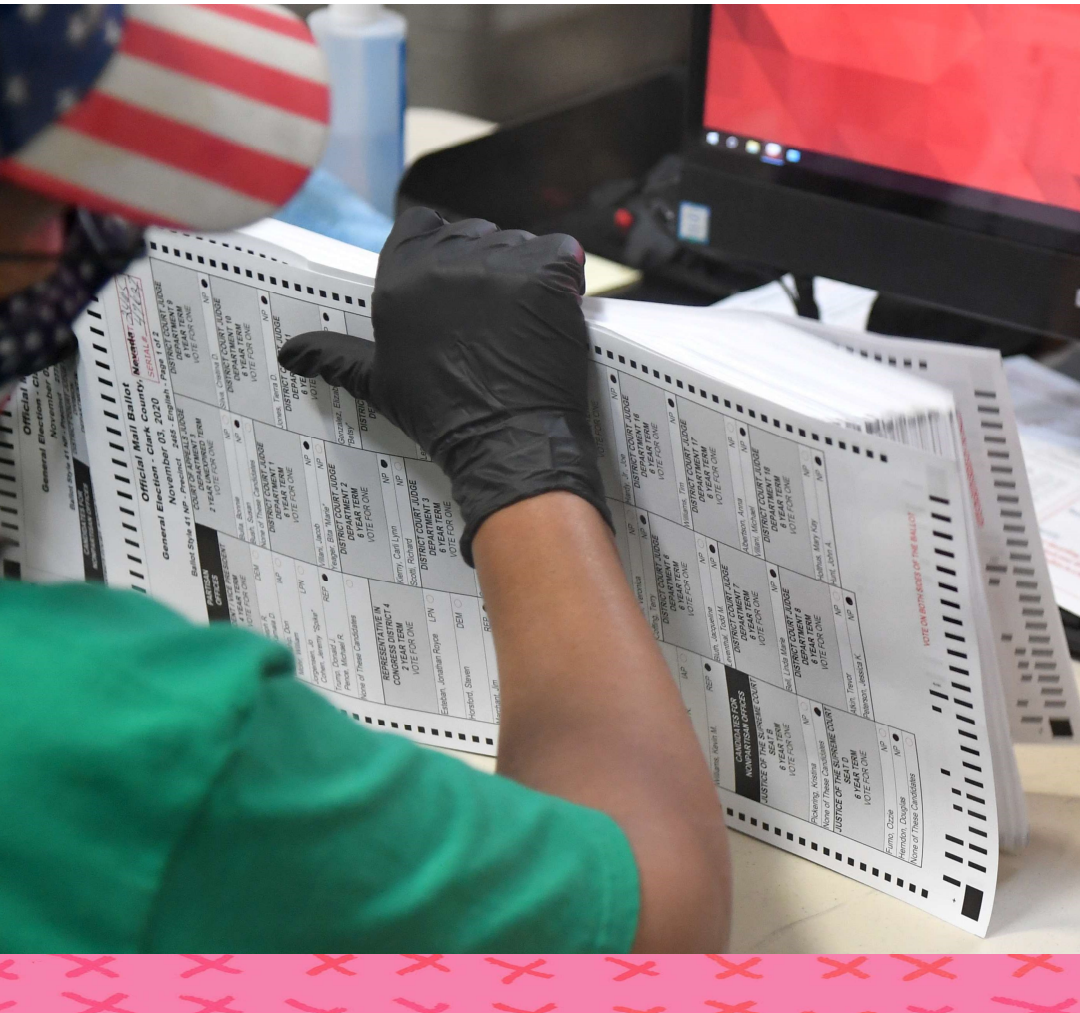


Recommendation 10

Voters should have the option of voting early and in-person for a period of **at least seven days** in advance of a federal election.

- States should provide a **balance of early, mail, and Election Day voting options** that are informed by voter behavior.





Recommendation 11

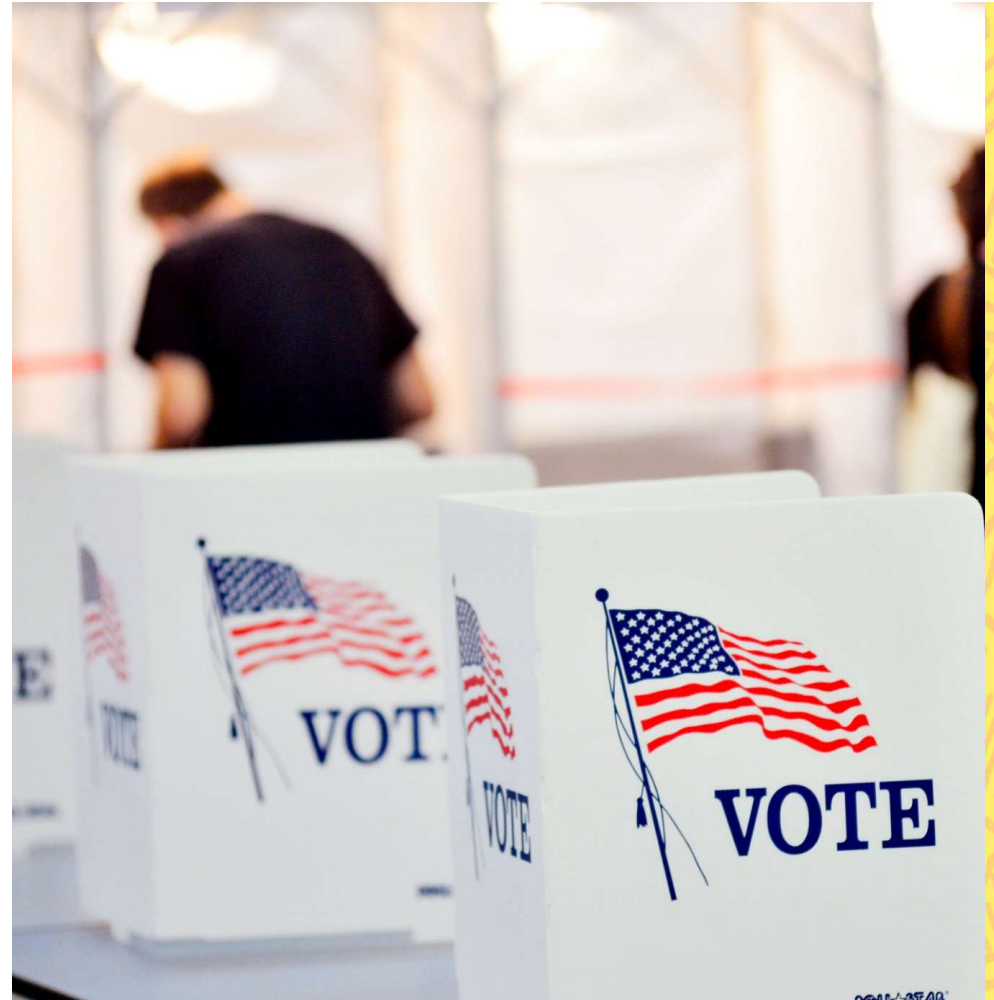
States should **codify a certification timeline and deadlines** while balancing the amount of time devoted to state versus local responsibilities.

- County certification deadlines should be set **no earlier than 14 days after a general election** to provide time to complete precertification tasks

Recommendation 12

Threats against election officials and staff should be **taken seriously** by policymakers and law enforcement.

- **Punishable by penalties** equivalent to those assessed for threats against other public employees carrying out their official duties.





Bipartisan Policy Center

1225 Eye Street NW, Suite
1000 Washington, D.C. 20005

IDEAS. ACTION. RESULTS.