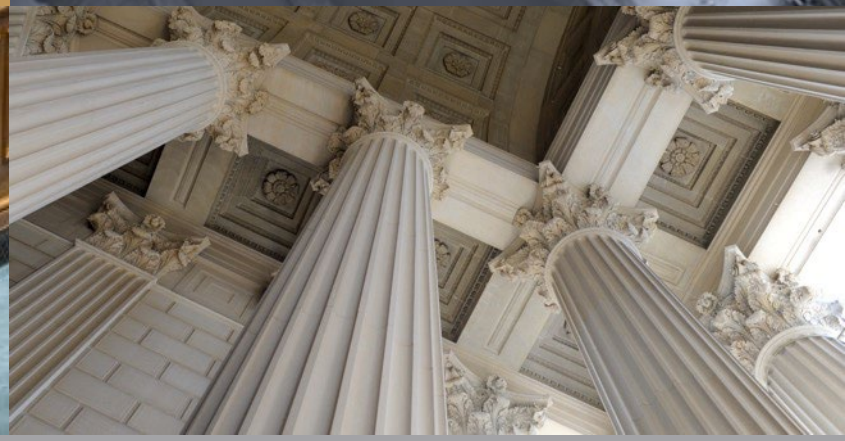
Voter ID: A National Perspective

Katy Owens Hubler

Director, Elections & Redistricting, NCSL

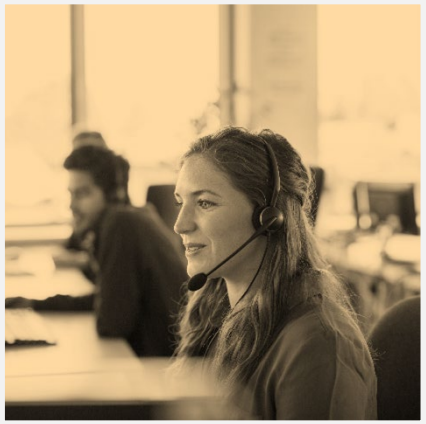
August 26, 2025



How NCSL Strengthens Legislatures

Policy Research

Connections

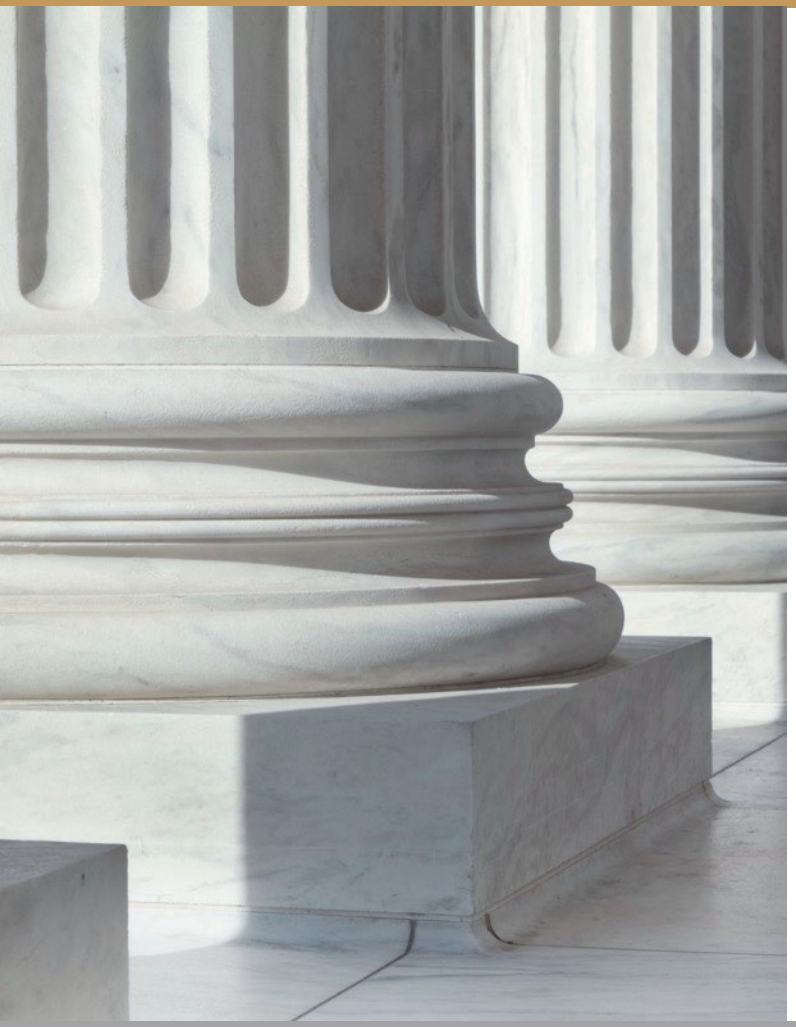


Training

State Voice in D.C.

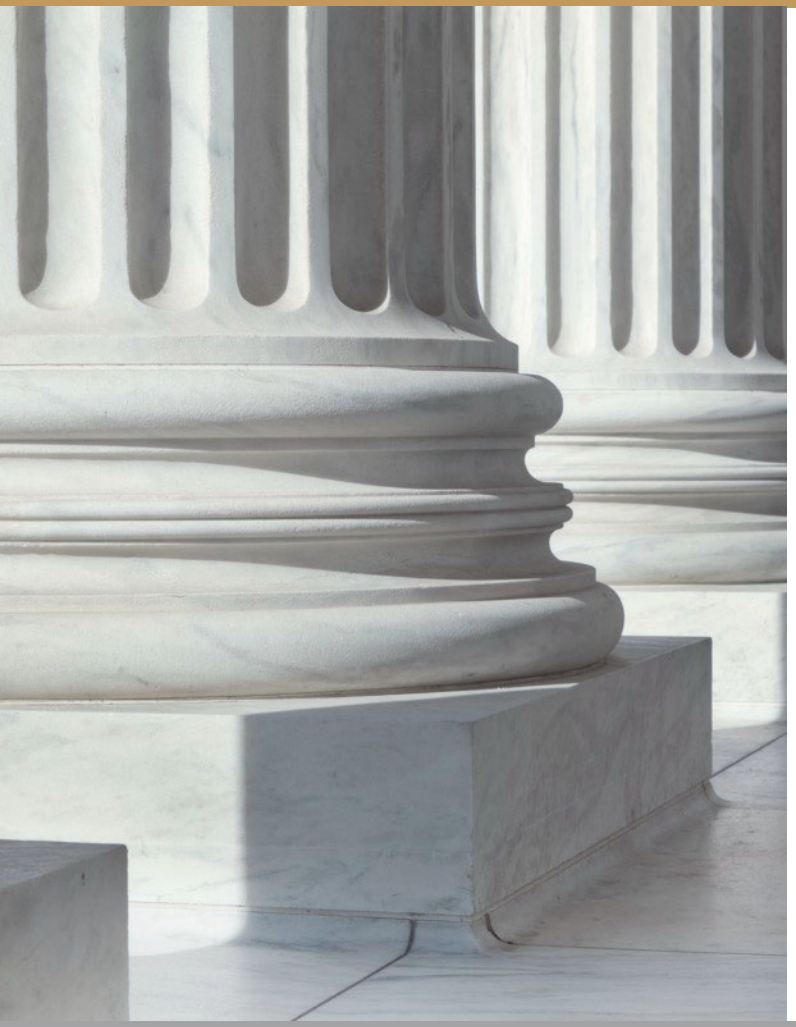
Meetings

History



- The first state to request a voter to show some kind of identification document at the polls was South Carolina, in 1950. No photo was required—just something that had the voter's name.
  - Followed by Hawaii (1970), Texas (1971), Florida (1977), Alaska (1980) – mix of photo and non-photo requested
- By 2000, 14 states requested ID - states with Democratic and Republican majorities.
- Became a hot topic in election legislation in the 2000s.
- The Commission on Federal Election Reform (aka the Carter-Baker Commission), in 2005 made a bipartisan recommendation for voter identification at the polls.

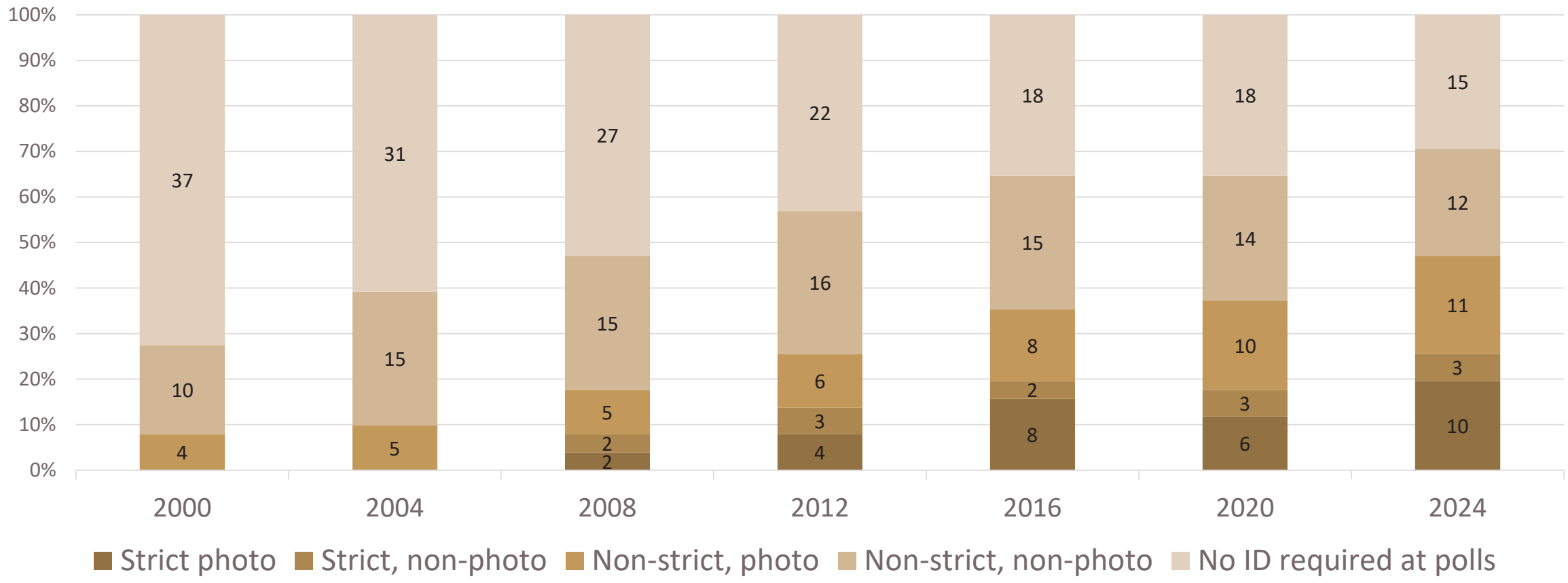
History



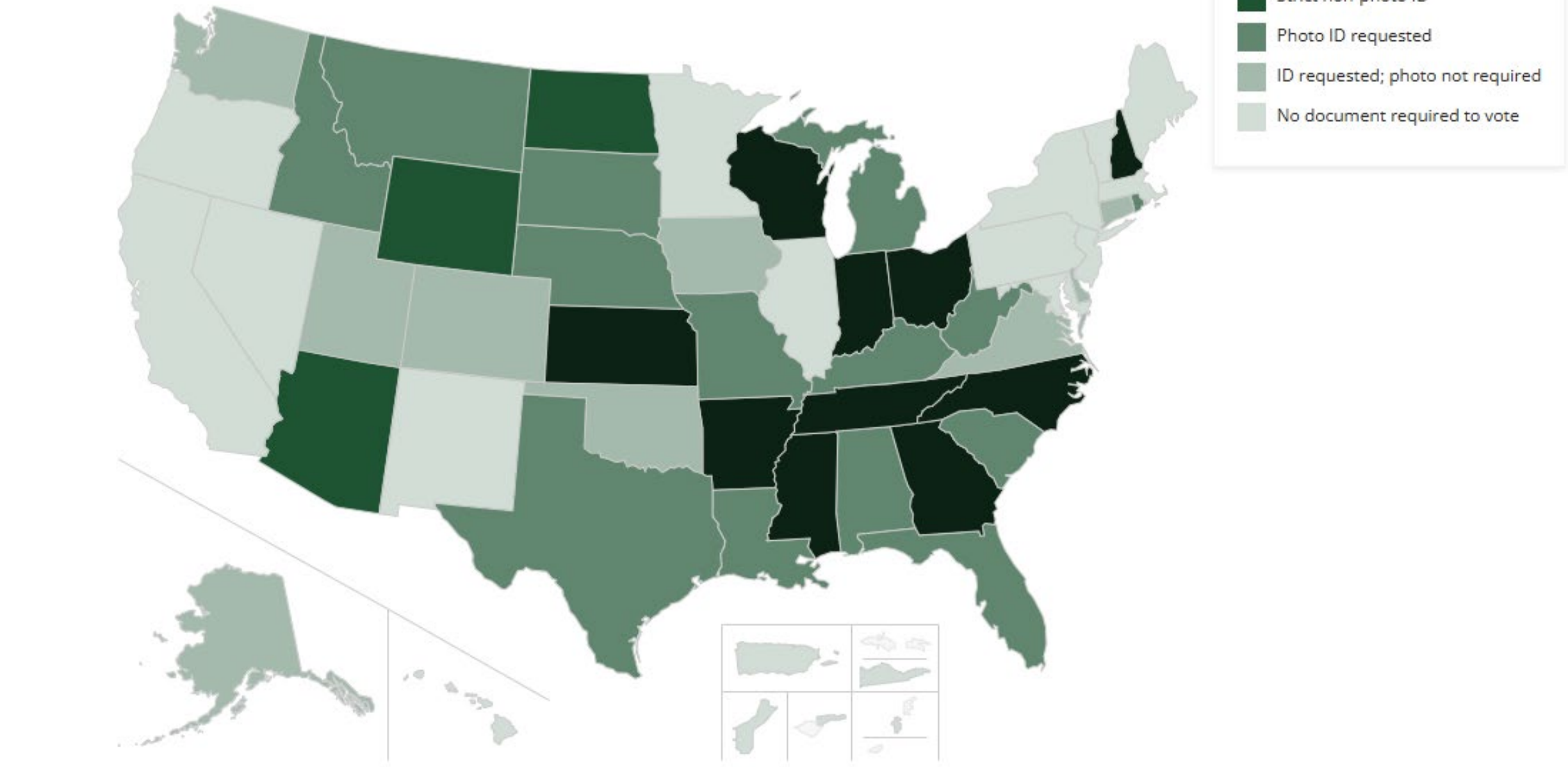
- Georgia and Indiana pioneered a new, “strict” form of voter ID, first implemented in 2008 (after Indiana’s law was given the go-ahead by the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Crawford v. Marion County)*
  - Instead of *requesting* an ID, these states required an ID.
  - If a voter did not have ID at the polling place → provisional ballot and voter would need to return with ID

Voter ID Bills

Voter ID 2000-2024



Current Voter ID Laws in Effect



Non-strict vs. Strict
Non-photo vs. Photo

Non-strict

At least some voters without acceptable identification have an option to cast a ballot that will be counted without further action on the part of the voter.

Non-Photo

Identification such as a bant statement with address, or another document that doesn't necessarily have a photo.

Strict

Voters without acceptable identification must vote on a provisional ballot and also take additional steps after Election Day for it to be counted.

Photo

Identification with a photo, such as a driver's license, state-issued ID, military ID, Tribal ID, passport or other.

Voters Without ID

Affidavit

Voters sign an affidavit asserting their eligibility to vote and/or awareness that falsely claiming eligibility is a criminal offense.

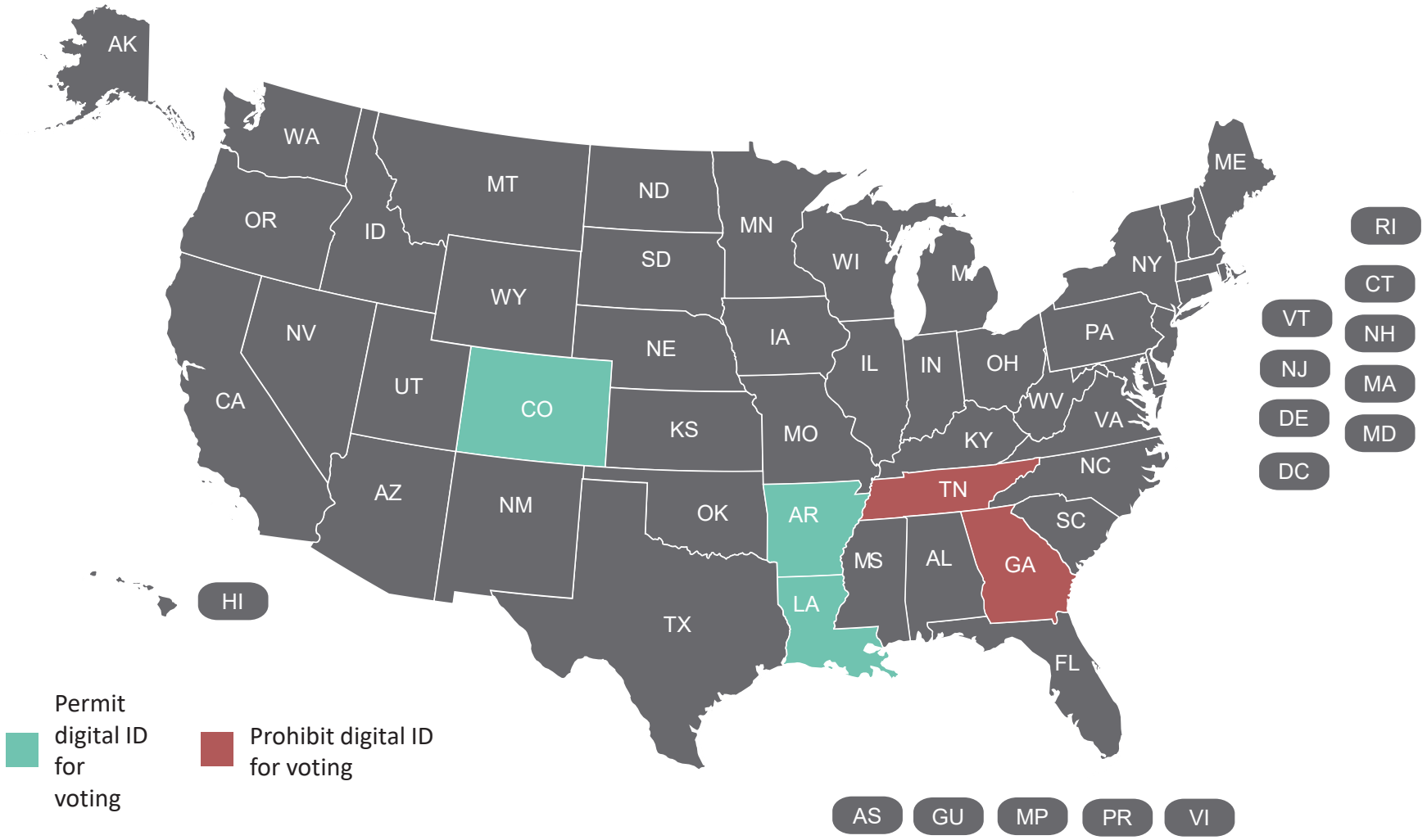
Signature

Voters must provide elections officials with a signature before casting a ballot. In most cases, this involves signing a poll book or voter registration list at the polls.

Biographical Information

Voters may also be asked to provide personal information, either verbally or in writing, at the polls. In most cases, voters are asked to give their names and/or addresses.

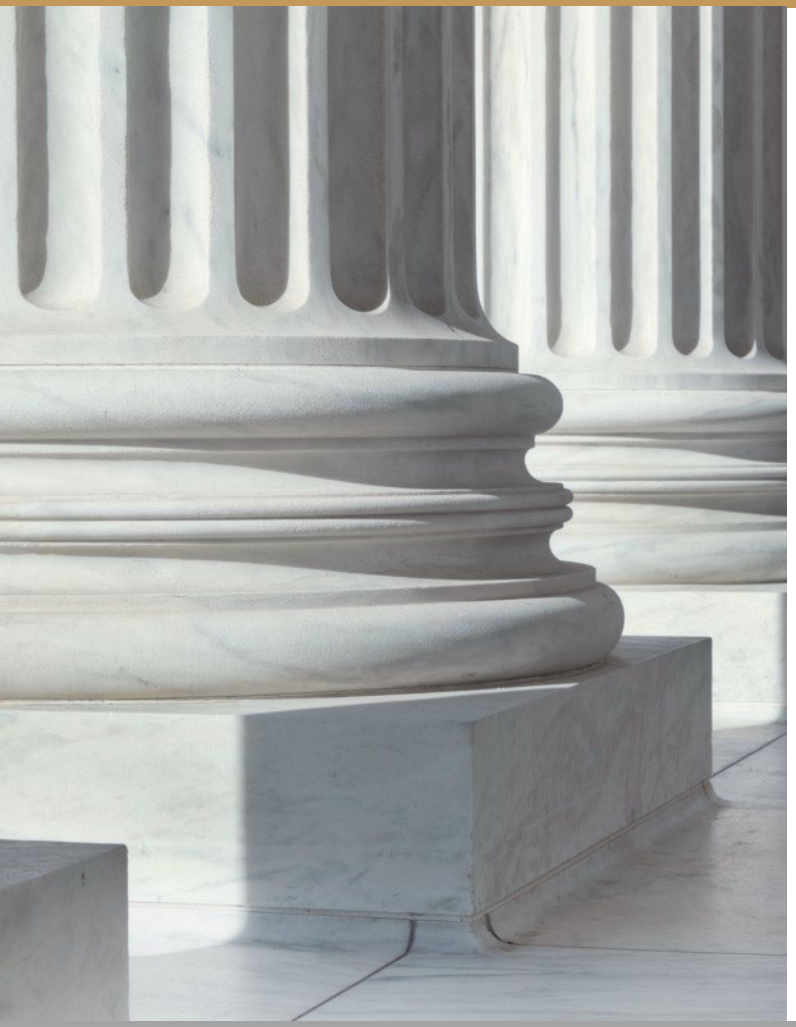
Digital ID


AK
WA
OR
CA
ID
NV
MT
WY
UT
AZ
CO
NM
ND
SD
NE
KS
OK
TX
MN
IA
MO
AR
LA
WI
IL
MS
M
IN
AL
OH
KY
TN
GA
WV
VA
NC
SC
FL
PA
NY
ME
HI
RI
CT
VT
NH
NJ
MA
DE
MD
DC
AS
GU
MP
PR
VI
Permit digital ID for voting
Prohibit digital ID for voting

Costs and Considerations

- Voter education and outreach
- Revised election materials
- Technology
- Additional provisional ballots
- Poll worker training
- Expanded access to ID cards
- Litigation

Court Cases



- **Crawford v. Marion County** (Supreme Court 2008) – upheld Indiana's 2005 voter ID law.
- **Homes v. Moore** (NC, 2021) originally ruled that voter ID was unconstitutional but was reversed in 2023, SB 824 (2018) does not violate North Carolina's constitution.
- **Veasey v. Abbott** (TX, 2017) The district court found that SB 14 passed in 2011 violated the 14th and 15th amendments as well as Section 2 of the VRA.
- **Frank v. Walker** (WI, 2016) The district court ruled that Wisconsin's voter ID law did not violate the 14th amendment.
  - This year WI voters passed a constitutional amendment enshrining Voter ID in the state's constitution.

Verifying Absentee Ballots

- All of the mail states use signature verification
- Utah will use last four digits of DL or or SSN (HB 300)
- Georgia requires DL numbers
- Minnesota requires DL or SSN
- Ohio requires DL number.
- Arkansas requires verification of registration or a copy of a photo ID, a utility bill, or a bank statement, etc.
- North Carolina requires absentee ballots to include a photocopy of the voter's ID

Voter ID and Voter Confidence

"Research on voter ID and confidence reveals no correlation between the adoption of strict voter ID laws and increases in voter confidence. Indeed, if anything, the political climate created by debates about strict ID laws could actually be reducing confidence and further polarizing opinions along partisan lines." (MIT Election Data + Science Lab, 2021)

"While there is substantial support in both parties for requiring a photo ID to vote, there is a sizable partisan divide in these views

- The share of Democrats supporting this has risen from 61% to 69% since last year.
- Support for voter ID remains nearly universal among Republicans (95% favor)."

(Pew Research Center 2024)

Questions?

Katy Owens Hubler

Director, Elections & Redistricting

Katy.owenshubler@ncsl.org

www.ncsl.org

@NCSLorg

Denver
7700 East First Place,
Denver CO 80230

Washington D.C.

444 North Capitol Street, N.W.
Suite 515,
Washington, D.C. 20001