



# **VOTE**

**BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY!**



## ***HOW TO TALK ABOUT VOTING & VOTER SUPPRESSION***

**ADVANCEMENT PROJECT NATIONAL OFFICE  
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**#VOTEBAMN**

## ***VOTER SUPPRESSION 101***

- Voter suppression is a process whereby legislators, state officials, political parties and others intentionally create voting laws, policies or rules that make it harder for people to vote.
- **Voter suppression is a racial justice issue that disproportionately targets Black and Brown communities.** Historically, states used poll taxes, literacy tests, grandfather clauses, felony disenfranchisement and outright violence to prevent these voters from registering to vote and casting a ballot. Today, states use a number of strategies to block access to the ballot box. These include:
  - **Strict voter ID requirements** – This means requiring voters to show ID from a limited list of approved IDs. Obtaining birth certificates and other underlying documents to obtain an ID often cost voters money, even if the required ID is free.
  - **Closing & consolidating polling locations** – Polling locations are disproportionately closed in Black and Brown communities, making travel to polling locations harder and longer, especially via public transportation.
  - **Voter roll purges** – This means knocking people off the voter registration rolls because they have not voted for a specific length of time.
  - **Felony disenfranchisement** – Preventing those in jail or those with certain criminal convictions who have completed their sentences from registering and/or casting a vote.
- With the monumental change we have seen in the months since George Floyd's murder, we know that people of color are galvanized to make change and want to cast a ballot despite COVID-19.
- The solution to combatting voter suppression tactics means over the long-term, eliminating signature matching requirements, preventing the closure of polling locations in Black and Brown communities, and overturning laws that make it nearly impossible for Returning Citizens and those with other criminal convictions to get back on the voter rolls.
- To defeat voter suppression once and for all, we must also restore Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, which forced states with a history of discrimination to get permission from the federal government to change their voting laws. We must also enshrine in the

U.S. Constitution an affirmative right to vote so every voter can cast a ballot in a free, fair and safe election.

## ***THE FALSE NARRATIVE OF VOTER FRAUD***

- Under the guise of “voter fraud,” and protecting the “integrity of elections,” states have intentionally enacted discriminatory laws and policies that make it harder for Black and Brown voters, young people, and the poor to cast a ballot.
- Voter fraud is *extremely* rare. A [report](#) by Loyola Law School found only 31 credible incidents of voter impersonation in an investigation of more than one billion votes cast. Even President Trump’s National “Election Integrity Commission” disbanded because it found no real [evidence of fraud](#).
- False claims of widespread vote-by-mail fraud are not based in fact. Americans are more likely to [be struck by lightning](#) than to commit vote-by-mail voter fraud. False allegations of widespread voter fraud are excuses to impose greater voting restrictions and establish "ballot integrity" units that are sure to inconsistently and subjectively reject ballots amidst the global health pandemic.
- The repetition of false claims of voter fraud is dangerous because it emboldens states and gives them cover to pass restrictive voting legislation that attacks voting rights and targets communities of color, young people, the elderly and veterans. It also reduces Americans’ confidence in our democracy and democratic processes.
- In the midst of a global pandemic, state and federal leaders must make decisions based on data and facts. Refusing to expand vote-by-mail options due to false claims of voter fraud is reckless and risks further endangering public health and the lives of Black and Brown voters.
- Instead of wasting tax dollars by establishing voter fraud taskforces, election officials should invest in measures that expand access to the ballot like providing more secure, tamper-free drop boxes, and providing return postage on applications and ballots.

# ***VOTE. BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY!***

## ***SAMPLE TALKING POINTS***

- It is abundantly clear that our nation is headed in the wrong direction and that Black and Brown communities are bearing the brunt of two pandemics: the novel coronavirus and state violence. The failure of our nation's criminal legal system to secure justice for George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Rayshard Brooks, Breonna Taylor and others, indicate that our nation desperately needs change.
- COVID-19 has exposed pre-existing inequities in health care, employment, education and housing between communities of color and their white counterparts. Black and Brown people have experienced disproportionate contraction and fatality rates, as well as unemployment rates because of an overrepresentation among low-wage workers.
- These issues have affected young people across the country. Many have lost family and friends to COVID-19. Many more struggle to juggle work, school and childcare in an unprecedented national emergency.
- With more than 200,000 Americans succumbing to the coronavirus and millions mobilized by the unjust killings of Black people this summer, it is clear that the time for change is now.
- Throughout 2020, young people of color took action leading demonstrations and marches to demand justice. These efforts yielded important wins like:
  - The passage of Breonna's Law, banning no-knock warrants in Louisville, Kentucky;
  - The affirmative vote of the Minneapolis City Council to begin the dismantling of its police department which further lead to Minneapolis Public Schools terminating its contract with school resource officers; and
  - The introduction of the BREATHE Act in Congress, which would divest federal funds from policing and mass incarceration.
- This is what's possible when young people of color take the lead and demand better for their communities. This what happens when the nation follows their lead.
- This November, Black and Brown young people have an opportunity to translate the political power they've built in the streets to make change at the ballot box. By voting, young voters can lead the transformation of their communities on issues like racial justice, health care, police brutality, the economy and education.

- Gen Z and Millennials will be the [largest voting bloc](#) this year, making up 37% of the electorate. That's more than 1 in 3 voters! Voting is one more way young voters of color can make their voice heard and ensure that the people elected to public office reflect their values and commitment to key issues.
- **This election is about more than the presidential candidates; it's about our communities.** Locally, judges, district attorneys, sheriffs, and school board members in our neighborhoods are up for election. These public officials will determine whether police and white supremacists are held accountable, whether youth in communities of color will get a quality education, and whether Black and Brown community members will face disparate treatment in court and face harsh sentencing.
- Elections for mayor, city council and county governing bodies will determine whether our communities will ultimately divest from policing and mass incarceration or implement a new vision for public safety. By voting, young voters of color can continue to build power to ensure their voices are heard on issues that directly impact them and their families.
- **Regardless of how they vote, Black and Brown voters must make a plan to ensure they vote safely.** Voting early, when there will be less people at the polls, is one way Black and Brown voters can vote without jeopardizing their health or the health of their loved ones.
- Contrary to public narratives, vote-by-mail is another safe and secure way to vote. Voters can ensure their ballot is counted by requesting their ballot early, returning it to their local election offices or a drop box. Voters should track their ballots online to ensure it is received and counted.
- In the midst of a global health pandemic, the nation has reached a watershed moment around race and justice. Despite the attacks on communities of color, young voters of color must vote by any means necessary.