

Democracy and Civic Participation

Ohio stands at a crossroads this election season, with politicians working hard to deny voters the right to cast a ballot.

A bill in the legislature would sharply restrict the forms of identification voters can present to be able to vote. The bill would require voters to produce a driver's license, state ID card, military ID or U.S. passport. This will have an outsized impact on seniors, minorities, students, people with disabilities and low-income families – most of whom tend to vote Democratic.

Progressives across the state are fighting back and working tirelessly to register voters in advance of Election Day.

When Ohioans have a chance to vote directly on issues, we support working people, labor rights, and good jobs. Repeatedly, Ohio policymakers have tried to curtail workers' rights and Ohio voters have fought back through the ballot box. In 1958, 1993, 1995, and 2011, out-of-touch legislators and governors tried to curtail workers' rights by attacking the ability of unions to collect dues, by weakening Worker's Compensation, and by eliminating collective bargaining rights for firefighters, teachers and other public employees. Each time, Ohioans used something called the citizen's veto to restore working people's rights and power through the initiative process. Similarly, Ohio voters have used their ballot power to assertively improve employment conditions, raising the minimum wage in 2006 and trying to establish paid sick days in 2008, which they were poised to do before a deal was struck to remove it from the ballot. Decade after decade, Ohio voters have gone to the polls and voiced support for Ohio's working people.

After Republicans emerged from the November 2010 elections with new majorities in statehouses across the country, a total of 37 states saw strict voter ID laws introduced in 2011 and 2012. Many of those proposals contained elements of the ALEC "model" voter ID act, which imposes new burdens on the right to vote by requiring voters show state-issued ID cards that approximately 11 percent of voting-age American citizens do not possess.

How to Talk About Criminal Justice Reform

Lead with Values

The United States Constitution states that, "We are all created equal." Our elections need to be of, by, and for the people. Voting brings us together as Americans and as Ohioans and it's something we can do to help strengthen our community. All eligible Americans should be able to cast a ballot and have their voice heard for their future, their children's future and the future of our nation.

Emphasize the Ends

The stakes are personal. A photo ID bill, bipartisan redistricting and allowing people to vote online are issues at the heart of our future as a democracy. This is about whether our schools are funded and whether we have a health care system that works for everyone. It's about whether we're able to create and change policies that help struggling families make ends meet. It's about whether we have the ability to advocate for our families, our communities, and our collective good.

Focus on Lived Experience

Voting gives Ohio's working families a say in what happens in our lives and in our communities. Many are struggling

these days – to find a job, pay the rent, put food on the table – and we want a say about what we can do to solve these problems. One vote may not make a difference by itself, but together, Ohioans' voices count.

Name the Causes

Politicians The voter ID bill is part of a decades-long, national strategy by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) – an alliance of corporate legislators and multinational companies – to concentrate wealth and political power in fewer and fewer hands. The politicians who carry ALEC's political water are trying to manipulate the system for their own gain. If passed, a photo ID law would disproportionately harm minorities, seniors, veterans, students, people with disabilities, and folks who have been hardest hit by the economic downturn are most likely to vote Democratic.

Link the Problem to the Solution

We need to change the way we think about voter registration. We have the technology to add millions of new voters through online registration. If you're an eligible voter, you should be a registered voter – period.