



The 2026 Midterms

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT GUIDE FOR LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES

Your vote protects our rights, our communities, and our democracy. This guide is a nonpartisan resource designed to provide general information about voting and civic engagement. It does not support or oppose any political candidate or party.

WHY CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MATTERS IN 2026

Midterm elections determine who holds power at the federal, state, and local levels. The 2026 elections will have significant implications for issues that affect our daily lives, including healthcare, economic opportunity, LGBTQ+ rights, and voting rights.

According to the [HRC Foundation's LGBTQ+ Political and Civic Engagement \(PACE\) survey](#):

- 92% of LGBTQ+ adults say they are "definitely" planning to vote in 2026
- At the same time, many LGBTQ+ voters face concerns about participation:
 - 87% are concerned about voter ID issues
 - 80% are concerned about harassment or intimidation at polling places

What this means: LGBTQ+ people are highly motivated to vote and have the power to influence these elections, but many also face real concerns about participation.

When barriers prevent people from voting, our communities and democracy are weakened. The 2026 midterms are an opportunity to elect leaders who will be responsive to people's needs and support a fair, accountable, and functioning democracy.

This guide will help you **navigate the voting process, understand your rights, and access resources to support yourself and others.**

VOTING IN THE 2026 MIDTERMS

1. Register and Check Your Status

Being registered—and *knowing your registration is correct*—is one of the most important steps.

- Many voters express concern about being challenged or harassed at the polls
- Ensuring your registration is accurate can help reduce that risk

👉 Register or check status: <https://actnow.io/icndGR7>

✓ Double-check:

- Name spelling
- Current address
- Registration status

2. Make a Voting Plan

Most LGBTQ+ voters already intend to vote, and you probably do too—but planning is what helps ensure follow-through.

Be sure you know:

- When you'll vote. Voting early or by mail can help ease concerns about going to the polls on Election Day.
- Where you'll vote. If you're voting in person on Election Day, this is especially important.
- What ID (if any) you need. 👉 Check ID rules: <https://www.vote.org/voter-id-laws/>
- Who will vote with you. Making a plan with a family member or friend will help both you and them follow through on voting and make going to the polls easier.

3. Choose How You Want to Vote

As part of your voting plan, you can decide how and where you want to vote.

If you want to vote in person, you can:

- Vote early or on Election Day,
- Request help or accessibility support,
- Ask for a paper ballot if needed.

If you plan to vote by mail, you can:

- Request your ballot early,
- Track it if available,
- Return it to the proper location before the deadline.

👉 Deadlines: <https://www.vote.org/absentee-ballot-deadlines/>

PROTECTING YOUR VOTE

Concerns about voting safely and confidently are felt by many, especially among trans voters and voters of color. Knowing the following information can help Election Day go smoothly and help you feel prepared in the case of issues.

Know Your Core Rights

You have the right to:

- Vote if you are registered and eligible;
- Stay in line, even if the polls close;
- Ask for help from a person you trust or a poll worker if anything is unclear;
- Request a provisional ballot if there is an issue;
- Vote without harassment or intimidation.

If Something Goes Wrong

If you encounter issues like being challenged, intimidated, or turned away, the most important thing is your safety. If you feel unsafe, move toward official poll workers or inside the polling place and/or call a voter protection hotline. Trust your instincts. If you can:

- Stay calm and assert your right to vote
- Ask to speak with a poll supervisor
- Request a provisional ballot if needed
- Document what happened if possible
- Call the Election Protection Hotline for help:
 - English: 866-OUR-VOTE
 - Spanish: 888-VE-Y-VOTA

VOTING WHILE TRANS, NONBINARY, OR GENDER NONCONFORMING

For many trans and nonbinary voters, concerns about ID mismatches, gender markers, being misgendered, or being questioned are very real.

Primary Resource:

👉 Voting While Trans (Advocates for Trans Equality / A4TE) [Voters for Trans Equality](#)

Key Tips:

- Your ability to vote depends on your registration—not your appearance
- If ID is required, bring the accepted form listed for your state
- You can bring someone to support you
- If challenged, request a provisional ballot

SUPPORT FOR VOTERS EXPERIENCING RACIAL PROFILING OR IMMIGRATION-RELATED CONCERNS

PACE data shows concerns about:

- Being perceived as not a citizen
- Being questioned about eligibility
- Being profiled based on race, ethnicity, or language

Key Protections:

- Poll workers cannot ask inappropriate or unrelated questions beyond voting requirements
- You have the right to vote without discrimination
- You are entitled to equal access at the polls

Resources:

- ACLU Voting Rights <https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/voting-rights>
- NAACP Civic Engagement <https://naacp.org>
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice <https://advancingjustice-aaajc.org>

Practical Tips:

- Bring the documentation required by your state
- Ask for a supervisor if something feels wrong
- Document and report any issues

LANGUAGE ACCESS & MULTILINGUAL SUPPORT

If English is not your preferred language:

- You may bring someone to assist you
- Some polling locations provide translated materials

Resources:

- Spanish hotline: 888-VE-Y-VOTA
- <https://vote.gov/es>
- <https://apiavote.org>

GET OUT THE VOTE (GOTV)

PACE research shows LGBTQ+ communities are already civically engaged in many ways:

- Advocacy and protests
- Petition signing

- Online information sharing- 35% frequently share political content online
- Community conversations
- 67% of LGBTQ+ voters frequently talk about politics with friends and family

👉 Peer-to-peer engagement is powerful.

Encourage your friends and family members to register, make a voting plan, vote, and help others.

Simple Ways to Help:

- Ask your friends and family: “Are you registered?”
- Share helpful links and deadlines
- Make a plan together
- Offer rides or reminders
- Volunteer for GOTV efforts to help other voters exercise their rights
- Volunteer as a poll worker 👉 <https://www.powerthepolls.org/HRCFoundation>

Often, people don't need convincing, all they need is support navigating the process.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The PACE research tells a clear story:

Although navigating real barriers and concerns, LGBTQ+ people are engaged, motivated, and ready to participate in the upcoming midterm elections.

You don't have to do everything. Make your plan, show up, and help one other person. That's how participation grows.

There is too much at stake to sit this moment out. Building a free and fair society where LGBTQ+ people have the same rights and protections as everyone else depends on all of us showing up. Voting is one of the most powerful ways we can defend our rights, protect one another, strengthen our democracy, and shape the future.