

VOTING RIGHTS



The right to vote and to have one's vote counted accurately and equally is a fundamental right in our democracy. Our right to freely choose who governs us, and on what terms, is at the heart of democratic governance.

The ACLU of Utah works to increase voters' access to the ballot box. We also work to defeat restrictions on citizens' right to freely and safely exercise their right to vote. Increasingly, voters are being subjected to unnecessary challenges and restrictions that can be construed as political in nature. Often, these challenges target specific groups of people who tend to vote in a particular way.

With respect to voting rights this session, the ACLU of Utah will continue to support a bill we drafted two sessions ago, **SB 53 "Voter Challenge Revisions."**

This bill amends the procedure for challenging voter eligibility by requiring those other than election workers to file written challenges with the county clerk in advance of an election. Challengers would bear the burden of demonstrating why a voter is not eligible to vote and must so state under oath with penalty of perjury. The challenged voter would then be given the opportunity to provide proof of eligibility. This bill has the support of the County Clerks statewide and passed favorably out of the Senate Government Operations Committee.

THE ACLU OF UTAH'S POSITION:

We need to encourage – not discourage – increased voter turnout and democratic participation.

TALKING POINTS ON VOTING RIGHTS

For SB 53, "Voter Challenge Revisions"

- This change will ensure that all eligible voters are able to vote and that the challenge process cannot be manipulated to exclude voters for political or other reasons.
- We need to streamline the challenge process and free up election official time on Election Day to deal with real election issues.

