



DEMOCRACY

INITIATIVE

Petition Engagement Guide

Democracy Initiative's #DontMessWithOurVote! Petition

You have a critical part to play in raising awareness about voting rights and building grassroots demand for 21st Century Democracy. With fewer than 100 days until the next midterm election, democracy is facing an uphill battle in 2018. As many as 40 million Americans who voted in 2016 will not cast a ballot in the 2018 midterm election—with two thirds of those drop-off voters being voters of color, young people, and the working class.

Making matters worse, between the 2014 and 2016 elections, roughly 16 million names nationwide were purged from voter rolls. Several new risks have emerged in voter purges in the recent year:

- The growth of the flawed interstate crosscheck system with database of 100 million voters, purports to detect possible cases of people voting in multiple states but gets it wrong 99% of the time
- Increase number of states scouring their rolls to identify alleged noncitizens registered to vote
- Conservative activist groups have sued states and local jurisdictions to force them to purge their rolls more aggressively

SHOWING OUR SOLIDARITY

Our coalition has been vocal about the need to demonstrate our collective power by mobilizing our 40 million members across the country to create a reflective democracy that works for all. The voting rights petition is intended to provide DI partners with a tool to raise awareness and educate members on election preparedness between now and the election and help facilitate deeper engagement around 21st century democracy in 2019.

Collectively, our goal is for 100,000 people to lift up the vision of an inclusive democracy. We want to build a base to show elected officials we stand together to protect our right to vote. Unifying around a set of principles and engaging our members by linking democracy to the issues they care about, we can collectively broaden their understanding. Participation in the democratic process means taking action leading up to and beyond Election Day.

The Democracy Initiative invites partners to sign-on and share the Don't Mess With Our Vote! Petition.

TAKE ACTION

Please send 1-2 email blasts to your membership sharing the voting rights petition to show our unified strength. The DI encourages you to craft an email that makes the most sense for your members and will provide a specific URL link with the pledge for your organization to move members from education to action. We can create a specific URL link is unique and secures captured data of members available ONLY to your organization.

How to think about prioritizing email blasts:

STEP 1: Invite your national list to participate as part of your civic engagement program by sending the voting rights petition in an email. Ask your members to sign the petition for a democracy that works for all. Begin to identify members within your organization passionate about democracy and infrequent voters who are vulnerable to voter purging. Potential hooks include anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, National Voter Registration Day, and Election Protection.

STEP 2: Send the voting rights petition in an email to your active campaign states in Florida, Maryland, Michigan, and Missouri. Connect the ongoing democracy campaigns to the need for us all to join together in solidarity for a democracy that works for all. As you continue to engage your members on these specific democracy campaigns ballot initiative, invite them to also sign a pledge to vote or send them information about voting in their state to ensure they are equipped to vote this fall.

STEP 3: Send the voting rights petition in an email to states where purges have happened, or states you have identified for a 2018 voting rights campaign. In states with voter purging procedures (Ohio, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Oregon, Oklahoma, West Virginia and Montana), or states that participate in the flawed interstate crosscheck system, your members are on the front lines defending democracy. The pledge is an opportunity to call members together in action to stay vigilant.

STEP 4: Share the petition on social media. You can use our sample tweets, FB posts, and images in this guide, which also includes a sample email to your members.



Sample Membership Email

Dear Members of organization [X],

This summer, we are working closely with our partners at the Democracy Initiative (DI) to raise awareness about the ongoing, coordinated attack on our voting rights. The DI is a powerful coalition of more than 69 progressive organizations. We are proud to be part of the DI, and to collaborate on important pro-democracy campaigns. Please sign our coalition petition, to demand that local election officials, here in [X] State, ensure that all eligible voters are registered, they are able to access the ballot, and that their votes will be counted.

The coordinated attacks on voting rights are mounting against us. Wealthy interests and corporations are actively encouraging the purging of voting lists, the use of voter ID laws, and other policies that disenfranchise the working poor and communities of color. Polling places are being closed and early voting and voting hours are cut back, making it more difficult to vote. Funding for election security is scarce. As a result, trust in the political process has plummeted, and voter participation rates are at all-time lows. In 2014, the midterm elections had the lowest turnout in 70 years, with just 36.4% of voters going to the polls. This November, 26 million young people, women, and people of color who voted in 2016 are predicted to not vote. We need these 26 million voices to be heard. We need ALL of our voices to be heard.

To demonstrate the growing public demand for voting rights and election security, we are collecting signatures on a petition, titled 'Don't Mess With Our Vote' petition. The petition will be delivered to election officials, including governors, secretaries of state, and county clerks. By signing the petition we collectively demand:

- A 21st century voting system in which all eligible voters are registered and every vote is counted,
- An end to voter suppression laws such as Voter ID,
- A voting process that is both efficient and accessible through reforms like same day registration automatic voter registration, accessible and widespread early voting locations, and statewide vote by mail options,
- Significant investment in electronic election security to reduce the possibility of digital election interference.

We can't and won't sit idly by. Special interests and the wealthy few can't silence our collective voices or match our power. Join us as we demand state officials enact policies that increase turnout, guarantee all eligible voters have the right to vote, and dramatically boost funding in election security. Our right to vote is too important to be left in the hands of electoral officials alone, who act in their self-interest or for wealthy and corporate interests. If we want politicians and laws that support our interests—protection of civil rights, access to affordable healthcare, clean water and air, and higher wages—raising our voices is the only way to win.

The petition can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/ycmnbv4c>.



Sample #DontMessWithOurVote

Tweets

- What do we do when we're under attack? Stand up, fight back! Join us to fight for our voting rights and sign the petition: <https://tinyurl.com/ycmnbv4c> #DontMessWithOurVote
- Many of us and our families risk losing, or have already lost, the right to have our say in how our country is run. It's time to stand together. Sign the petition: <https://tinyurl.com/ycmnbv4c> #DontMessWithOurVote
- For politicians and laws that work for us, to protect civil and women's rights, clean air and water, to support affordable healthcare, and higher wages, we must stand together to protect our vote. Sign #DontMessWithOurVote at <https://tinyurl.com/ycmnbv4c>
- Our country succeeds when government responds to the will of the people. Purging voter rolls, or making it harder for anyone who's eligible to vote, flies in the face of this country's democratic principles. Sign the #DontMessWithOurVote petition at <https://tinyurl.com/ycmnbv4c>
- We're advocates for workers, people with disabilities, the environment; for civil, religious, and for LGBTQ+ and women's rights. If we want change on any individual issue, we must join forces across all of them. Sign the #DontMessWithOurVote petition at <https://tinyurl.com/ycmnbv4c>



Social media graphics provided in a separate document.

Sample #DontMessWithOurVote Posts

- Our alliance is powerful. We are black, white, and brown; urban and rural; working class, comfortable, and struggling to get by. We stand ready to act to see our shared principles upheld—in every state, from every candidate for office, in every ballot initiative and every law. Show our collective power and sign the “Don’t Mess With Our Vote!” petition at <https://tinyurl.com/ycmnbv4c>
- A robust and participatory democracy is the only way we will win. People are the foundation and primary driver for change, and we cannot allow our power to be undermined by wealthy interests. Show our collective power and sign the “Don’t Mess With Our Vote!” petition at <https://tinyurl.com/ycmnbv4c>
- It is within our collective power to make voting accessible and to reverse the low turnout trends of the past several election cycles. It is for all our best interests to ensure every eligible voter—60% of whom are from historically disenfranchised communities: women, young people, and people of color—show up to vote for our future representatives and initiatives. Sign the “Don’t Mess With Our Vote!” petition at <https://tinyurl.com/ycmnbv4c>



Social media graphics provided in a separate document.