DEMOCRACY DEFENDED
Lessons from the 2022 Elections & the Path Ahead in 2024
The Legal Defense Fund (LDF) is America’s premier legal organization fighting for racial justice. Using the power of law, narrative, research, and people, LDF defends and advances the full dignity and citizenship of Black people in America.

The data and narratives included in this report build on years of collaboration between LDF and critical national, state, and grassroots partners. Hundreds of volunteers dedicated their time and attention to collecting and reporting the data, visuals, and stories contained herein.

Most photos included in this publication were taken by LDF staff, contracted photographers, and volunteers, or are otherwise credited. Maps were generated by LDF staff, using Social Explorer mapping tools. Data reported from the 866-OUR-VOTE hotline was obtained from the Our Vote Live system maintained by the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. Much of the other data cited is primary source, directly derived from observations made by LDF staff, volunteers, and partners. This report reflects their tireless efforts.

The report was written by members of LDF’s Prepared to Vote team, including Amir Badat, Anne Houghtaling, Leigh Logan, and Victoria (Tori) Wenger, as well as Rachel Carter, DeMetris Causer, Christina Das, CeCe Huddleston, Evans Moore, Michael Pernick, and Larnée Satchell. Editorial support was provided by Jin Hee Lee, Tona Boyd, and Janai Nelson. Design was completed by Kaye Lee Johnston, Leigh Logan, and Tori Wenger.
INTRODUCTION

A Model of Year-Round, Integrated Advocacy

Protecting the right to vote has been a core mission of the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) since its founding in 1940. Following the 2000 elections, LDF joined with fellow civil rights organizations to launch the nonpartisan Election Protection network and 866-OUR-VOTE hotline. In tandem with these efforts, LDF later launched its Prepared to Vote (PTV) initiative to provide nonpartisan voter education and on-the-ground election monitoring and advocacy during elections. In 2020, LDF launched the Voting Rights Defender (VRD) project, a companion effort of PTV, to enhance year-round advocacy to expand voting access, invest in sustained partnerships, and broaden multi-tactic advocacy efforts to protect and expand voting rights in target states.

2022 Midterm Elections — Lessons Learned

In 2022, LDF conducted civic engagement, election monitoring, and advocacy efforts in seven southern states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas. As identified through the monitoring and advocacy work during these elections, limitations on the ability of Black voters to access the ballot and have their votes counted remained a prominent factor in U.S. elections. In addition to voter intimidation and election sabotage threats, LDF and our partners observed many obstacles that made it harder for Black voters to vote. This report incorporates just some of the data points and observations conveyed during elections in LDF’s target states in 2022. It also reflects lessons informed by these findings and key takeaways from prior Democracy Defended reports that can position civil rights advocates to engage strategically to support voters in 2024 and beyond.
Through the Prepared to Vote/Voting Rights Defender initiatives, LDF works to defend and advance the rights of Black voters and the promise of a free and fair democracy through the full life cycle of the political process.

- **Tracking Election Bills**
  - and supporting voting rights legislation

- **Educating Voters**
  - on changes in the election laws and their voting rights

- **Mobilizing Communities**
  - to exercise their right to vote

- **Observing**
  - and **Addressing Barriers to Voting** before and on election days

- **Challenging Discriminatory Practices**
  - at the polls and referring issues for litigation

- **Monitoring the Post-Election Process**
  - to ensure fair and trusted results

- **Providing Research**
  - and publications to inform future advocacy

**Build Black Political Power**
TOP ISSUES IN 2022

Voting Infrastructure and Administration Problems
Issues concerning voting infrastructure and administration permeated the midterm elections in each of LDF’s target states. Monitors observed polling locations with barriers for seniors and voters with disabilities, poor signage identifying polling locations, insufficient supplies of voting materials at polling locations, and technology failures.

Limited Availability of Voting Options
The availability of multiple voting options continues to be significant for Black political participation. The lack of mail-in and early voting options in several states increased the need for voters to vote on Election Day, leading to long lines and heightened opportunities for disenfranchisement due to voting administration and process failures. Expansion of early voting options in some states, including South Carolina, where early voting was available to voters for the first time, reduced pressures on Election Day and improved access to the ballot box.

Confusion About Nonpartisan Monitor Role
Poll workers in multiple states improperly restricted LDF monitors and other nonpartisan volunteers who were wearing apparel with nonpartisan messaging from being within the no-electioneering zone around the polling place. These issues arose due to incorrect interpretations of electioneering rules and poor training of poll workers.

Poor Information About Poll Site Changes
The process for poll site selection varies across states and many states failed to effectively communicate poll site information to voters. Poll site listings in many states remain decentralized, resulting in unreliable information and voter confusion. Moreover, the lack of transparency makes it difficult to track patterns of discriminatory changes and closures in Black communities.

2022 IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

2,444,932
Voters reached through mailings

1,437,594
Voters reached by text message

100+
Local partner organizations in target states

70+
Volunteer trainings conducted

2,300+
Polling sites visited across target states
People are seen in line to vote on the first day of early voting in Cobb County on Nov. 26, 2022 in Marietta, Ga., for Georgia's Senate runoff election. Photo by Elijah Nouvelage for The Washington Post via Getty Images
ALABAMA 2022

In 2022, the Alabama team addressed issues with poll site changes and transparency in advance of Election Day and dispatched volunteers during the primary and general elections to observe challenges at the polls. As recorded here, problems ranged from poor signage to considerable barriers to accessibility, among other issues.

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

- **30+** nonpartisan field volunteers
- **18+** cities reached
- **143** poll sites visited
- **197+** poll site reports submitted

23% of reports indicating "no issues" — meaning that when the reports were submitted, the poll sites showed no barriers to voting

HOTLINE REPORTS

During the Primary elections on May 24, 2022, and the General elections on November 8, 2022, the 866-OUR-VOTE Election Protection Hotline received over **550+** calls from **35** counties.

Most issues reported through the hotline were related to voter registration and absentee ballot status. These issues, as well as misinformation, were among those reported by our volunteers.

FIELD REPORTS

The top issues reported by monitors, depicted on the chart below, were accessibility and signage, which were oftentimes intertwined. Parking concerns also recurred across sites, which also often implicated accessibility or lack of signage to designate reserved accessible spots.

The map depicts the poll sites visited across target counties statewide. The map overlays this data with the Black Voting Age Population. Map produced in Social Explorer.

Polling location in Alabama. Photo by volunteer.
In the lead up to the November 2022 midterm elections in Alabama, LDF, along with our partner organizations, determined that the lack of accurate, uniform, and comprehensive polling place information available to voters was a significant barrier to voting that particularly disenfranchised Black voters and other voters of color.

Under state law, Alabama has a duty to notify voters of their polling locations by publishing a list of poll sites. However, some counties failed to publish anything online, while others published information that was inaccurate, contradictory, and at times so seriously lacking in relevant detail as to not meaningfully inform voters of their polling locations. We reviewed poll site information published by county officials in more than a fifth of Alabama counties and found that, among those counties with a Black population greater than 50%, each county lacked a precinct list, poll site map, and an interactive poll locator tool to enable voters to learn their voting location based on their address.

We sent a letter to the Alabama Secretary of State urging him to publish a comprehensive list of poll site locations and precinct information for each county so that Alabamians could have accurate and up-to-date information on their correct polling place on Election Day. We also requested that he issue guidance to each county’s election officials on the requirement that any poll site closures or changes comply with Alabama and federal laws. The Secretary of State, however, shirked his responsibility to oversee election administration by stating the duty to publish polling location information falls on county officials.

State and local advocates are now directing efforts to future legislative changes that would ensure all Alabamians have access to information on where to vote. LDF will continue to join partners in advocating for transparency in poll site selection and information.

ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT

UNIFORM POLL SITE INFORMATION

... among those counties with a Black population greater than 50%, each county lacked a precinct list, poll site map, and an interactive poll locator tool to enable voters to learn their voting location based on their address.
SIGNAGE: Signage issues were reported in nearly all poll site issue checklists submitted.

Many of the reported signage issues cited problems with directional signage. This included issues with volunteers having difficulty locating the polling location from the street, but also instances in which it was hard to find the poll site entrance from the parking lot. Many sites were in large multi-purpose buildings, and the lack of signage indicating where voters should go to cast their ballots proved to be a significant impediment during the elections.

ACCESSIBILITY: Volunteers reported accessibility issues in almost every poll site issue checklist.

As discussed above, the reported signage and accessibility issues were often intertwined. A majority of the poll site reports that referenced accessibility issues concerned with signs that incorrectly directed voters to inaccessible entrances. In addition, the accessibility issues revolved around inaccessible poll site entrances and lack of parking, i.e., poll sites often lacked curb cuts and ramps that allowed voters who use wheelchairs to access the polling locations.

The most common parking issue identified was no designated parking spaces for voters, especially at polling locations that were open to the public for other purposes on Election Day. This caused voters to park in areas that were not designated for parking. Monitors also observed that even at polling locations with an open lot, or open spaces, there often was no signage to indicate that any parking, including accessible parking, was specifically available to voters.

Some voters with disabilities had no available designated parking spots, or there were no designated spots left at congested parking lots.
Looking ahead, LDF and partners will...

→ Educate voters about the impact of *Allen v. Milligan* voters in their communities and nationwide

→ Mobilize Alabama voters to realize their power in the new Black-majority districts, and statewide

MOBILIZING COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE BLACK BELT

The congressional elections in 2024 will mark the first time that Black voters in Alabama will comprise the majority in two congressional districts, following LDF’s success litigating *Allen v. Milligan* in the Supreme Court. In that case, LDF litigators and co-counsel argued that Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act required a congressional map that provides Black voters with an opportunity to elect their candidate of choice in two districts, now enacted for the 2024 elections.

LDF Senior Counsel Deuel Ross appears before the Supreme Court after presenting oral argument. Photo by Allison Shelley
In 2022, the LDF team and partners recorded an overwhelming number of issues, ranging from improper voter challenges and other suppression efforts prior to Election Day, to confusing signage, long lines, and accessibility concerns once polls opened. This report provides a lens into just some of these concerns and the steps ahead.

**IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS**

- 400+ nonpartisan volunteers
- 168 cities reached
- 356 early voting and poll sites visited
- 1600+ poll site reports
- 75% of reports indicating "no issues" — meaning that when the reports were submitted, the poll sites showed no barriers to voting.

**HOTLINE REPORTS**

From the beginning of the year up to the Nov. 8 elections, the 866-OUR-VOTE Election Protection hotline received over 2,600 calls from over 40 counties.

While many of the calls regarded individual voters’ questions about their registration, absentee ballots, or other individualized needs, broader issues reported included topics like malfunctioning or broken machines at poll sites.

**FIELD REPORTS**

The majority of poll site reports indicated no issues (75.5% of the total reports submitted). Of poll sites with reported issues, charted below, the main concerns related to signage, followed by parking, law enforcement activities, and long lines, while a variety of other miscellaneous issues rounded out the remaining issue reports.
Voter challenges prior to the election presented a concerning threat in Florida. A member of the public submitted a frivolous mass voter challenge to the eligibility of 2,257 voters in Pinellas County. LDF sent a letter to county Supervisors of Elections (SOEs) ahead of the 30-day challenge period prior to Election Day providing recommendations for how to deal with frivolous mass voter challenges under the law. The Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections followed LDF’s recommendations and rejected the challenges outright.

The decision in Pinellas to reject this challenge was an important win and set a helpful precedent for frivolous voter challenges in Florida.

At least 14 Supervisors of Elections submitted voter challenges against at least 2,370 Florida voters during the 30-day period before Election Day defined under law. These challenges were based on information provided to Supervisors by the new Florida Office of Election Crimes indicating that certain voters were ineligible.

The overwhelming majority of these challenges were based on past felony convictions, although a small number of challenges were based on mental incapacity, death, double-voting in past elections, or residing at a non-residential address. These challenges present a serious concern for Florida voters who may have prior felony convictions.

The decision in Pinellas to reject this challenge was an important win and set a helpful precedent for frivolous voter challenges in Florida.
SIGNAGE: When citing signage issues, most volunteers indicated inadequate Spanish-language information.

Signage proved to be a tremendous barrier for Florida voters in the 2022 election season. Spanish translation is required across the state, and many of the reports regarding improper signage cited the lack of Spanish language access. In some instances where the signs had Spanish translations, the font size of the translation was significantly smaller than the English translation. Additionally, many sites did not have enough “Vote Here” signs directing voters to the polling site entrance.

LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES:

Law enforcement presence was reported in various regions across the state.

Volunteers reported an unexpected amount of law enforcement activity at polling locations this cycle. One volunteer submitted a report noting that there was a police car idling near the poll site entrance and that around the site itself were many signs highlighting the police’s presence in the area. Police presence at poll sites can intimidate voters, which can, in turn, deter voters from casting ballots.

ISSUE SPOTLIGHT

MISLEADING SIGNAGE

Leading up to Election Day, LDF, the Okaloosa County Branch NAACP, and the NAACP Florida State Conference sent a letter to the Okaloosa County Supervisor of Elections expressing concern over misleading signage outside early voting locations. Temporary signs reading “Republicans Vote Here Today” were placed in the immediate vicinity of at least two early voting sites.

Even if posted beyond the electioneering boundary, these signs created an unacceptable risk of voter confusion and violated state and local law, including prohibitions on dissemination of false information to induce others to refrain from voting.

Specifically, the signs created a risk of voter confusion because they implied that Republicans and non-Republicans vote in different locations and on different days. Neither was true. The risk of confusion was also significant because the signs were similar in color and typography to the official “Vote Here” signs used by election officials.

Due to LDF’s advocacy, the Okaloosa County Attorney arranged to remove misleading signs prior to Election Day.

LDF will continue to monitor this issue in future election cycles.
Looking ahead, LDF and partners will...

- Educate voters on their rights to inoculate against mis- and disinformation about registration and voting rights
- Monitor for mass voter challenges and voter roll purge attempts
- Continue to recruit volunteers to serve as trusted messengers in their communities for reliable voting rights information and to support poll monitoring efforts

COUNTERING INTIMIDATION

Florida has been a focal point of efforts to deter and intimidate eligible voters from participating in the democratic process—both through the state’s efforts to expand the policing of elections and through voter challenges and the spread of mis- and disinformation by private actors.
GEORGIA 2022

Facing barriers from the enactment of Georgia’s 2021 omnibus voter suppression bill, SB 202, the Georgia team pursued a range of advocacy efforts to reduce harm to voters in advance of the 2022 elections. In addition to proactive advocacy, the team and partners compiled extensive data on barriers experienced by voters at the polls.

**IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS**

- **40+** nonpartisan field volunteers
- **29** cities reached
- **124** early voting and poll sites visited
- **148+** poll site reports submitted
- **37%** of reports indicating "no issues" — meaning that when the reports were submitted, the poll sites showed no barriers to voting.

The map depicts the poll sites visited across target counties statewide. The map overlays this data with the Black Voting Age Population. Map produced in Social Explorer.

**HOTLINE REPORTS**

During the May 24, Nov. 8, and Dec. 6, 2022 elections, the 866-OUR-VOTE Election Protection Hotline received over 2,500 calls from the 120 LDF target counties.

Of the thousands of reports into the hotline, many were questions about individuals’ registration status or absentee ballot tracking. The others cited poll sites that opened late, voter roll purges, voting machine malfunctions and more.

**FIELD REPORTS**

The main trends of the issues reported by monitors visiting poll sites, charted below, revolved around accessibility, parking, and signage, which were reported at comparable rates. Other miscellaneous issues made up over a quarter of issue reports, while over a third of reports submitted indicated no issues at all.

In a photo taken during the primary election on May 5, 2022, a sign describes prohibition on electioneering within 150 feet of a poll site in Newton County, Ga. Photo by volunteer.
As a result of SB 202, the omnibus voter suppression bill enacted in Georgia in 2021, the time period for early voting in runoff elections was limited to just five mandatory days (compared to 17 mandatory days in previous elections), with discretion among county election officials to offer a limited number of additional days. The Georgia Secretary of State issued a last-minute bulletin further limiting the availability of early voting in runoff elections by prohibiting counties from exercising their discretion to offer early voting on Saturday, Nov. 26, based on an incorrect reading of state law.

LDF filed an amicus brief in support of plaintiffs in a lawsuit challenging the Secretary’s misinterpretation of state law, which emphasized the racial disparities that would result from the Secretary’s incorrect interpretation and also educated the court on the democracy canon as a tool to interpret ambiguities in state law. The court ultimately ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and held that counties could provide Saturday early voting.

LDF coupled this litigation with extensive letter writing efforts urging counties to exercise their discretion to offer weekend voting and sent nearly 300,000 text messages to voters in 23 counties about these opportunities.

**ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT**

**EARLY VOTING OPPORTUNITIES**

Nov. 15, 2022
LDF sends letters to all 159 Georgia counties encouraging them to provide at least three additional early voting days

Nov. 17, 2022
LDF files amicus brief in support of Saturday early voting opportunities

Nov. 18, 2022
Court rules that counties can host Saturday voting

Nov. 21, 2022
LDF sends letters to all 159 counties encouraging them to provide early voting on Saturday in light of the court ruling

Nov. 26, 2022
27 counties offer early voting and over 70k voters cast a ballot

Nov. 27, 2022
28 counties offer early voting and over 87k voters cast a ballot
TOP ISSUES ON ELECTION DAY

PARKING: Parking issues were identified in almost all reports.

Volunteers cited many instances of inadequate parking, which were intertwined with signage and accessibility issues. Often reports indicated that polling locations did not have any parking lots or designated parking spaces for voters and others highlighted sites that did not have any accessible parking. Schools served as the location for many of these poll sites, and school buses and cars that filled the parking lot for pickup and drop off blocked any designated parking for voters.

SIGNAGE: Campaign signage obstructed the view of “Vote Here” signs at many poll sites.

Like parking, signage issues highlighted other underlying inadequacies at poll sites. In addition to the frequent signage issues, e.g., the lack of directional signage to poll site entrances and accessible parking spaces, many sites had issues with electioneering. Voters reported many instances in which campaign signs blocked “Vote Here” signs, which made locating the polling places difficult.

ISSUE SPOTLIGHT

POLLING PLACE CHANGES AND TRANSPARENCY

Changes in polling locations between early voting and Election Day led LDF volunteers to a handful of polling locations not operating on Election Day. This happened across the state, and each location had signage indicating the closure.

Weeks before the election, LDF filed an open records request with the Georgia Secretary of State’s office to receive a list of polling locations statewide but did not receive a list from the office until after the election (well past the deadline for responding to open records requests).

Transparency around polling location placement and changes is an important issue to be addressed moving forward.

Maps overlay issue reports on 2020 Census Black Voting Age Population data generated using Social Explorer.
Looking ahead, LDF and partners will...

→ Build alliances in rural communities to support Black voters across the state
→ Use multi-tactic methods to reach voters and defend democracy through the full life cycle of the voting process: from registration, GOTV, voting days, and the process of counting and certifying the election

NEXT UP FOR GEORGIA

MOBILIZING VOTERS WHERE THEY ARE

2024 is another important year for our nation’s democracy, and once again, all eyes will be on Georgia.

LDF will work tirelessly to ensure Georgia’s Black voters are able to fairly access the ballot free from intimidation or voter purges and combat any effort at the local or state level to diminish Black voting power.

Tuesday, November 8 by 7 p.m.

To vote by mail, apply for an absentee ballot by this date.

Friday, October 28

To vote by mail, apply for an absentee ballot by this date. The sooner, the better!

Tuesday, November 8 by 7 p.m.

Your county registrar needs to receive your absentee ballot before this date and time. Be sure it arrives on time by sending your ballot by mail or at a drop off location as soon as possible.

Visit your county’s election website to find an early voting site to drop your absentee ballot.

Learn more about absentee voting here: bit.ly/GaAbsenteeVoting

PLAN 1: VOTE BY MAIL

PLAN 2: VOTE EARLY IN PERSON

October 17 – November 4

Monday – Saturday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Your county’s days and hours may be different.

Find your county’s days and hours by visiting bit.ly/GaVotersInfo

Learn more about voting hours by visiting bit.ly/GaVotersInfo

PLAN 3: VOTE IN PERSON ON ELECTION DAY

Tuesday, November 8

Polls open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Find your polling location and check your registration status.

Get help voting if you need help due to blindness, deafness, or you struggle to read English. Tell a poll worker you need assistance.

What if I don’t have one of these Photo IDs?

Get a free ID card at any county registrar or Department of Driver Services. Learn more at bit.ly/GaIdInfo.

GET HELP VOTING

Dial 866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683). Multiple language support (e.g., Spanish, Arabic, and Asian languages) is available.

FOR GEORGIA ###
In 2022, the Louisiana team provided voter support and poll monitoring efforts during four elections with various municipal and statewide races on the ballots. The data revealed important trends regarding issues such as poll site changes and accessibility concerns. This report sheds light on these topics and more.

**IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS**

- **40+** nonpartisan field volunteers
- **29** parishes reached
- **348** early voting and poll sites visited
- **400+** poll site reports submitted
- **32%** of reports indicating "no issues" - meaning that when the reports were submitted, the poll sites showed no barriers to voting.

**HOTLINE REPORTS**

Across the multiple Louisiana elections held in 2022, the 866-OUR-VOTE Election Protection hotline received 228 calls from roughly half of Louisiana’s 64 parishes.

While many of the calls regarded individual voters’ questions about their registration, absentee ballots, or other individualized needs, broader issues reported included topics like machine and technology issues and improper instructions from poll commissioners.

**FIELD REPORTS**

The main trends of the issues reported by monitors visiting polling sites, charted below, revolved around accessibility and parking, which were oftentimes intertwined. These reports with accessibility issues often had to do with insufficient or lack of accessible parking.

**ELECTION PROTECTION**

- **228** calls
- **32** parishes
TOP ISSUES ON ELECTION DAY

PARKING: Parking limitations were reported for polling sites in nearly every parish monitored.

Parking proved to be a significant impediment in the voting process for all Louisianans. One monitor submitted a report where the reserved parking at a polling location was paid parking, and even those spots were occupied by law enforcement vehicles. Additionally, many of the polling locations were situated in buildings that have reserved parking spaces, which limited the availability of parking spaces for voters and made it difficult to access the poll site in a timely manner.

ACCESSIBILITY: Inaccessible entrances, parking spaces, and walkways were reported almost 100 times.

Volunteers submitted 94 reports in which poll sites had issues regarding accessibility. These came from the majority of monitored parishes. In addition to the parking issues mentioned above, many volunteers cited accessible entrances being blocked off by vehicles and instances where entrances were inaccessible due to staircases or other barriers but were nonetheless inaccurately marked accessible.

ISSUE SPOTLIGHT

POLL SITE CHANGES

By the end of 2022, Louisiana implemented hundreds of changes to assigned poll sites, many of which were disproportionately located in three parishes with significant Black populations:

- **27** in Iberia
- **31** in St. Landry
- **26** in St. Martin

In other words, **39% of the changed poll site assignments** were in parishes that represent **less than 5% of Louisiana’s population**.

Many of those changes were complicated—for example, in St. Martin Parish, a previous polling place was split into three new sites, all changed from the previous location.

Some changes were made within days of an election. In one severe circumstance, a poll site in Jefferson Parish had to be evacuated and relocated to a nearby site due to a bomb threat. LDF’s rapid response team sent text messages to the thousands of impacted voters about the relocation and dispatched LDF team members to the site. Later reports confirmed that the threats were not related to the election, but the impact of displacing and frightening voters remained.

Maps overlay issue reports on 2020 Census Black Voting Age Population data generated using Social Explorer.

In a photo taken on Nov. 8, 2022, a sign indicates that a polling location has been moved in Lafourche Parish, La. Photo by volunteer
May 23, 2022
LDF and partners advocate for the successful passage of HCR14, a joint resolution creating a task force to study voting accessibility and report policy recommendations back to the Louisiana Legislature.

Dec. 10, 2022
Election monitors report multiple accessibility issues during the General Election, including an unstable wooden ramp at a polling site in New Orleans with a hole in the middle of the ramp.

Feb. 10, 2023
The HCR14 Task Force publishes a report with over a dozen recommendations to improve voting accessibility.

June 9, 2023
The Louisiana governor signs Act 277 into law, adopting multiple recommendations from the HCR14 Task Force.

ACT 277 PROVIDES FOR:
- Increased poll commission training and testing on accessibility laws
- Appointment of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance Officer in the Secretary of State’s Office
- The establishment of a Voting Accessibility Advisory Group in the Secretary of State’s office, including voters with diverse disabilities

ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT
VOTING ACCESSIBILITY

LDF staff and partners stand by at the Louisiana Capitol on June 9, 2023 as then-Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards signs Act 277 into law.

Photos by LDF staff

Images of poll site entrances and signage across Orleans Parish from the March 26, 2022 primary election and the Nov. 8, 2022 general election.

Photos by volunteer
The Dec. 10, 2022 general election marking the sixth election held in Louisiana that year alone, with similarly packed election calendars set to marking the following calendar years—including, among other elections, the statewide election for executive and state legislative seats in 2023 and the federal election in 2024. Strained resources and voter exhaustion result from Louisiana’s endless election cycles.

Looking ahead, LDF and partners will continue to try to counteract the effects of election fatigue by:

- Advocating for a comprehensive study of election consolidation options
- Providing voter education on the importance of voting in every election, including training on the power of local offices
- Continuing to advocate for fair maps that provide Black voters equal opportunities to elect their candidates of choice

**PRIMARY ELECTION DAY**
Tuesday, November 8, 2022
Polls open 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

And mark your calendar for runoff elections on Saturday, December 10!

Your Prepared-to-Vote Checklist
Before you vote, remember to visit GeauxVote.com to:
- Confirm your registration status.
- Find your polling place.
- See what is on your ballot.
- And be sure to bring your ID.

ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?
Tuesday, October 11
Last day to register in person or by mail.

Tuesday, October 18
Last day to register online, with a LA driver’s license or special ID.

PLAN 1: VOTE ABSENTEE BY MAIL*
Friday, November 4 by 4:30 p.m.
For a mail-in ballot, apply before this date and time.
The sooner, the better! Apply online or print an application.
Delivered the application to your parish registrar by hand,**
mail, or fax.

Monday, November 7 by 4:30 p.m.
Register of voters needs to receive absentee ballots before this date and time.**

PLAN 2: VOTE EARLY IN PERSON
October 25 – November 3
Early voting (6:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.) Closed Sunday.
All Louisiana voters qualify to vote early in person!
If you have not already cast a ballot, you can vote early.

PLAN 3: VOTE ON ELECTION DAY
Tuesday, November 8
If you have not already cast a ballot, you can vote on Election Day between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m.

What’s on the ballot in my parish?
This season, voters across Louisiana will cast ballots on a variety of races at the federal, state, and local level. Contests on the ballot will vary statewide and you can find a sample ballot for your parish at GeauxVote.com.

Additionally, voters this year will decide on important constitutional amendments impacting a range of issues and rights. You can find out more information about amendments on the ballot at Nov 8 at bit.ly/Nov8Amends.

Know Your Rights!
- Vote if you are 18 or older.
- Vote if you have been otherwise incapacitated (e.g., mental health, disability, or if you struggle to read or speak English). More info at bit.ly/CitizenVoter.
- Choose who assists you (with some exceptions) if you need help voting due to blindness, disability, or if you struggle to read or speak English. More info at bit.ly/adjustedPerson.
- Vote if you are a law enforcement officer or if you have been convicted of a felony or of a violation of state or federal law. More info at bit.ly/adjustedOfficer.

Have questions or issues?
- Long lines? Polling location changed after your marked ballot? Name removed from voter roll? Voter intimidation? Misinformation? Voting machine or other technology issues?
- Email voter@naacpldf.org or call Election Protection: (866) OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683). Multiple language support (e.g., Spanish, Arabic, and Asian languages) is available.

GeauxVote.com
Before you vote, remember to visit to:
- Your Prepared-to-Vote Checklist
- Pre-Register Online
- Vote a regular ballot if you are on the “inactive voters” list.
- Vote free from intimidation, harassment, confusion, obstruction, and undue influence.
- Vote if you are in line by the time polls close.
- Vote if you have not already cast a ballot.

** bit.ly/LaVoteByMail
* bit.ly/LaVoteInPerson
Know Your Rights! For more info at bit.ly/UO7voter

In a photo taken on Dec. 10, 2022, voters are seen waiting in line at a polling location in Orleans Parish, La. Photo by volunteer
In 2022, less than one-third of Mississippi voters cast a ballot, among the lowest voter turnout in the nation. This low turnout is caused in part by multiple barriers: no early voting, no online voter registration, and no simple absentee ballot process. As this report captures, these barriers are compounded by other issues at the polls.

**MISSISSIPPI 2022**

**IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS**

- **22+** nonpartisan field volunteers
- **25** cities reached
- **108** poll sites visited
- **100+** poll site reports submitted
- **16%** of reports indicating “no issues” - meaning that when the reports were submitted, the poll sites showed no barriers to voting

**HOTLINE REPORTS**

During the elections on June 7 and November 8, 2022, the 866-OUR-VOTE Election Protection hotline received 200 calls from 50 of the 82 counties in Mississippi.

Of the 200 hotline reports, almost all were from individual voters who had questions about their registration status or how to locate their poll site. There were also multiple documented issues of intimidation, electioneering, machine malfunctions, and related problems.

**FIELD REPORTS**

The primary issues reported by monitors, charted below, revolved around accessibility and signage, which were oftentimes intertwined. Parking concerns also recurred across locations, which often included accessibility issues and lack of signage to designate reserved accessible spots.
TOP ISSUES ON ELECTION DAY

ACCESSIBILITY: Many poll sites did not have accessible entrances.

Most poll sites lacked proper accessibility measures which made it difficult for voters to access the locations. Some sites could only be reached by stairs and did not have an alternative route, while others that may have had a ramp were too steep or narrow for wheelchair users to navigate safely. Volunteers also reported many polling locations that did not have accessible door handles (those that can be opened with a closed fist). Finally, parking was difficult for voters who use wheelchairs. Volunteers cited many sites that had accessible parking, but in order to enter the poll sites, voters had to cross through an inaccessible grassy area or another lot.

SIGNAGE: Volunteers reported signage issues in at least one poll site in each county monitored.

Improper signage outpaced all other issues reported in the state. Volunteers documented poll sites that had zero "Vote Here" signs (which caused confusion on where to enter to vote), no signage directing voters to the accessible entrances (if there were any), and inadequate signage indicating the designated parking for voters.

ELECTION SUPPLIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The lack of physical election infrastructure has been a persistent problem in Mississippi’s elections, creating issues for all voters, particularly those with disabilities. This was true of the 2022 elections as well. Throughout Election Day, poll monitors repeatedly cited lack of adequate signage at polling locations across the state. Too often, signage was not visible from the street, and was not effective in directing voters to the voting location. Some sites only had one sign affixed to the door with no accompanying signage.

Many polling locations were given a single lawn sign and a single paper sign to tape on the entrance to their polling location. This caused difficulties for voters at polling sites located in a campus-style area, necessitating the need to ask for directions to the specific building and room that served as a polling location. This also caused issues for buildings that were difficult to find off main highways and roads.

At some polling locations, the lack of signage forced poll monitors to create their own signage.
In 2022, Mississippi voters continued to receive inaccurate information regarding their voting locations. In particular, many voters used the Secretary of State’s poll locator to identify their voting site, a tool that contained inaccurate voting site information—leading to confusion and disenfranchisement.

In 2021 and 2022, LDF sent the Mississippi Secretary of State letters demanding that he fix systematic misinformation in the Mississippi online poll locator that gave voters inaccurate information about their poll location. This issue affected over 65,000 voters in 2020 and persisted in the 2022 elections. As a result of LDF’s advocacy, the Secretary of State contacted county officials across the state to confirm that polling locations were accurately reported to voters. To supplement this effort, LDF sent a letter to all local officials regarding their reporting obligations and discouraging further lack of transparency with polling locations.

This effort resulted in clear publication of polling locations for Mississippi voters and reduced many closures.

Still, despite our advocacy, there were problems related to polling location misinformation on Election Day. In Precinct 45 in majority-Black Hinds County, voters were directed to the wrong polling location because the correct polling location was misidentified by the Secretary of State. LDF sent a mass text to the 2,600 voters in that precinct to inform them of the correct information.

[LDF’s] effort resulted in clear publication of polling locations for Mississippi voters and reduced many closures.

This image taken Nov. 8, 2022 shows the polling site entrance at Triumph Church in Jackson, Miss. Photo by volunteer.
In response to the recorded challenges identifying accurate poll site information and anticipating last-minute hurdles to voting access, LDF will continue to organize around advocacy solutions to mitigate voter confusion and increase transparency of election administration decision-making and information.

Looking ahead, LDF and partners will...

- Monitor poll site misinformation and pursue policy solutions
- Continue to fight for election administration transparency
- Coordinate with partners and volunteers to ensure voters have the information they need in advance of Election Day and the support they need to navigate voting barriers in real time on Election Day.
The 2022 primary election in South Carolina provided many insights, especially as the first election implementing statewide early voting. LDF worked with the South Carolina Election Protection Coalition to monitor the June primary election and the November general election. This report provides a snapshot of data collected, actions taken to ameliorate issues, and steps ahead.

### IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

- 50+ nonpartisan field volunteers
- 21 counties reached
- 229 poll sites visited
- 459 poll site reports submitted
- 52% of reports indicating “no issues” - meaning that when the reports were submitted, the poll sites showed no barriers to voting

### HOTLINE REPORTS

During the Nov. 8, 2022 general election, the 866-OUR-VOTE Election Protection hotline received 366 calls from 33 of 46 counties across South Carolina.

Similar to the field data, the majority of the reported issues referenced signage and accessibility issues, and the Election Protection Coalition, with the help of LDF attorneys, helped triage issues and support the voters who called.

### FIELD REPORTS

The most prevalent voting access issues reported during the elections were related to signage, and the next most common issue was accessibility. Analysis of these reports indicated that signage and accessibility issues often originated from the same polling locations. Many causes of these issues were insufficient signage directing voters to accessible entrances, parking, or curbside voting.
TOP ISSUES ON ELECTION DAY

SIGNAGE: Across over two dozen counties, volunteers submitted 83 signage issue reports.

The main signage issues were a lack of directional signage to the poll site entrance and parking. Many of the poll sites in the state are public buildings that transformed a portion of the space to accommodate voting, which meant that the site had more than one entrance. Many sites also did not have designated voter parking or signs directing voters to the reserved parking space. The lack of signage directing voters to the correct locations made it difficult to find the correct entrance and in turn made the voting experience longer than necessary.

ACCESSIBILITY: Almost 10% of field reports submitted statewide referred to lack of accessibility at poll sites.

Many accessibility issue reports were due to a lack of access at curbside voting. Curbside voting laws require that a poll worker check outside for voters looking to vote curbside every 15 minutes. Volunteers reported that poll workers were not checking for curbside voters despite having a designated space for curbside voting. In one instance, a voter got out of their car to notify the workers that they were waiting outside. Curbside voting is supposed to limit barriers to voting for voters with disabilities, but that is only the case when the law is followed.

ISSUE SPOTLIGHT

IMPROPER ENFORCEMENT OF THE ELECTIONEERING BOUNDARY

Monitoring electioneering boundaries and ensuring poll workers’ proper enforcement is crucial to the work of poll monitors. In South Carolina, electioneering is defined as persons wearing or handing out any campaign materials (apparel, buttons, stickers, literature, etc.) within 200 feet of any entrance to the polling place. Often, these boundaries need to be clarified because they are not marked at poll sites, and what consists of campaign materials can be subjective.

During the fall 2022 elections, the South Carolina Election Protection Coalition received numerous calls from across the state where poll workers wrongly turned away voters for wearing “Black Lives Matter” attire. As these reports accumulated, LDF worked with the ACLU of South Carolina to call local elections administrators and alert them of the First Amendment issues this practice posed, as well as the proper definition of partisan electioneering.
The 2022 midterms were the first election in which South Carolina implemented early voting. After a bill enacting early voting passed during the 2022 legislative session, South Carolina voters were able to vote early without an excuse during the midterms.

According to the South Carolina State Election Commission, 560,622 people, or nearly 16.5% of all registered voters, voted early during the November 2022 election.

While the turnout numbers were extraordinary, implementation of early voting was not without its shortcomings, with voters of color facing inequitable distribution of early voting locations. South Carolina law authorizes counties to designate up to seven early voting centers for an election that maximizes accessibility for all voters to the greatest extent possible. However, several counties implemented early voting plans that fell short of their statutory obligations to voters.

LDF identified inequities in early voting locations and sent rapid response letters to five counties with significant Black populations—Florence, Marion, Beaufort, Berkeley, and Orangeburg—where LDF identified additional possible early voting locations. LDF urged the local Boards of Election to provide reasonable and fair accessibility to early voting for Black voters, and to appropriately distribute locations throughout the counties. In Florence County, this aided in the addition of an early voting site, and several other counties have expressed a desire to add more sites in response to LDF’s advocacy.
AVOIDING ISSUES THROUGH POLL WORKER TRAINING IMPROVEMENTS

Many issues observed in South Carolina could be prevented with proper poll worker training. As the South Carolina Election Protection Coalition plans for the 2024 presidential elections, the focus will be on training and providing election workers with information to ensure safe and accessible voting for all South Carolinians.

Following the coalition’s advocacy in 2022 and 2023 to fight misinformation, the coalition plans to continue to advocate for more informed poll worker training that covers:

- proper signage
- precise definitions of “electioneering” and the electioneering boundary
- accessibility, particularly curbside voting requirements

If you have any questions or issues, call Disability Rights SC at 1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683).

Your Prepared-to-Vote Checklist

- Register to vote
- Confirm your registration status
- Find your polling place
- Bring your ID!

Note: All links are case sensitive.
In 2022, LDF’s Texas team recorded an overwhelming number of voter incidents across the state, ranging from lack of accessibility, delayed curbside voting, long lines, machine malfunctions, and intimidation. This report captures just a snapshot of these trends.

**IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS**

- **244+** nonpartisan field volunteers
- **95** cities reached
- **324** early voting and poll sites visited
- **494+** poll site reports submitted
- **30%** of reports indicating “no issues” - meaning that when the reports were submitted, the poll sites showed no barriers to voting

The map depicts the poll sites visited across target counties statewide. The map overlays this data with the Black Voting Age Population. Map produced in Social Explorer.

**HOTLINE REPORTS**

During the various 2022 elections, the 866-OUR-VOTE Election Protection hotline received over 4,000 calls from more than half of the state’s counties.

Many Texans called the hotline with questions regarding their individual statuses, but a significant majority of the calls dealt with polling place accessibility issues, tech malfunctions, intimidation, and more.

**FIELD REPORTS**

While most sites either had no issues or miscellaneous concerns, there were recurring reports of signage, accessibility, and law enforcement presence at polling sites in target counties monitored across Texas.

**ELECTION PROTECTION**

- **4000+** calls
- **50%+** counties
TOP ISSUES ON ELECTION DAY

LAW ENFORCEMENT: Many poll sites were located next to police precincts.

Volunteers reported many instances of intimidating law enforcement presence across the state, citing multiple sites that were located adjacent to police precincts. In one report during the primaries, a volunteer documented a sheriff that set up a tent outside a polling location, forcibly grabbing voters and telling them to vote for a specific candidate. The volunteer spoke to voters who mentioned feeling intimidated and less compelled to vote because of this encounter.

SIGNAGE: Signage was the top issue reported across poll sites monitored.

The main problems with signage revolved around inadequate markings of curbside voting, which forced voters to find alternative measures. Some poll sites had confusing signage that directed voters to two separate places for curbside voting, and neither was the correct place. Volunteers also documented many sites that lacked proper directional signage into the polling location.
Problems with polling place technology caused severe delays for voters on Election Day. Due to malfunctioning machines or confusing user interfaces, wait times reached over two hours at times at some poll sites. Most machines that malfunctioned were either freezing or failing to input votes. In some cases, confusing user interfaces caused user error, forcing voters to redo their ballot until the machine accepted their choices.

Additionally, polling places began to run out of paper ballots. In those instances, such as at the Houston Community College Alief Hayes Campus in West Houston, the sites were forced to close and refer voters to a nearby polling place. The Harris County election tech team was so inundated with calls that they were unable to fix issues at most polling places.

ISSUE SPOTLIGHT

ELECTION TECHNOLOGY AND SUPPLIES

In 2022, Texans faced serious instances of voter intimidation during the early voting period and on Election Day. In one case, a voter received a threatening letter regarding her party affiliation. At one poll site on Election Day, a voter was harassed and berated by another voter, causing her great distress. There were also numerous instances of poll workers incorrectly wearing party apparel or electioneers harassing voters inside the electioneering boundary. Though some harassers remained outside the 100-foot electioneering boundary, some boasted Confederate flags, large political banners and/or audio expressing their political views.

Throughout early voting, there were several concerning reports of intimidation and voter suppression from a historically Black polling place in Beaumont, Jefferson County. There, white poll workers repeatedly spoke in aggressive tones to Black voters and asked them to recite their addresses within earshot of other voters, poll workers and poll watchers, even when the voter was already checked in. White poll workers and white poll watchers followed Black voters and, in some cases, their Black voter assistants, around the polling place, including standing two feet behind a Black voter and the assistant, while the voter was at the machine casting a ballot. White poll workers helped white voters scan their voted ballots into voting machines but did not help Black voters trying to do the same thing. Partner organizations ultimately had to sue to ensure similar patterns were not repeated in the future.

VOTER INTIMIDATION

The image above is from the Morton Ranch High School polling site in Harris County, where a volunteer recorded lines lasting over an hour and malfunctioning curbside voting machines. Photo by volunteer

The image above was taken just outside a polling site in Collin County, Texas. While signs and flags were positioned beyond the 100-foot electioneering boundary, volunteers reported the intimidating effects of the display, which included a Confederate flag. Photo by volunteer
**ADDRESSING INTIMIDATION FOR ALL FORMS**

In the face of third-party efforts to intimidate voters, excessive presence of police at poll sites, and the state-level attempts to undermine local election official’s authority in communities with large populations of voters of color, LDF and partners will continue to monitor and address efforts aimed to deter voters and threaten democratic institutions.

Looking ahead, LDF and partners will...

- Monitor issues of intimidation at individual and systemic levels
- Support voters and election officials targeted by intimidation efforts and election sabotage attempts

**GENERAL ELECTION DAY**

**Tuesday, November 8, 2022**

Polls open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

**Your Prepared-to-Vote Checklist**

- Confirm your registration status. [link]
- Find your polling place. [link]
- See what ID you need to bring. [link]

**ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?**

**Tuesday, October 11**

Last day to register.

**PICK A VOTING PLAN**

**PLAN 1: VOTE EARLY IN PERSON**

October 24 – November 4

Polls open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

**PLAN 2: VOTE IN PERSON ON ELECTION DAY**

Tuesday, November 8

Polls open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

**PLAN 3: VOTE BY MAIL**

Check if you qualify to vote absentee here: [link]

**Friday, October 28**

Your county registrar needs to receive your request for an absentee ballot by this date. You can fill out your application with pen on paper. Then, mail it or drop it off at your county registrar’s office. The sooner the better!

Request an application here: [link]

**Tuesday, November 8 by 7 p.m.**

Your county registrar needs to receive your absentee ballot by this date and time. You can mail your absentee ballot or you can drop off your absentee ballot at a drop off location.

**WHAT IF I DON’T HAVE ONE OF THESE IDS?**

Voters can present a supporting form of ID and make a Reasonable Impediment Declaration that they are unable to obtain an acceptable form of ID. Learn more at [link]
Election Infrastructure Improvements
Whether to ensure timely delivery of absentee ballots, visible signage and adequate parking at poll sites, or functioning machine technology on Election Day, investment in the fundamental infrastructure of America’s elections must be a critical priority in 2024. Accessibility should be prioritized at every level.

Transparency in Poll Site Changes
While standards vary across states for reporting poll site changes and making them available to the public, LDF and partners will continue to pursue efforts to promote transparency and monitor for discriminatory poll site changes and closures.

Voter Education and Mobilization
As election rules continue to evolve due to legislative actions or court interventions, it will be essential that voters are informed of the rules that apply in their states. Voter education campaigns should be catered to address the unique circumstances of first-time voters, out-of-state and college students, and formerly incarcerated and justice-impacted voters. Outreach materials should also be provided in a range of languages.

Poll Worker Recruitment and Training
Poll workers serve as the frontline of America’s democracy. Recruiting a rising generation of poll workers and election staff will help promote the resilience of our political process. Further improvements to poll worker training can also serve as one of the most proactive means to avoid confusion, congestion, and other issues on voting days.

Countering Election Sabotage
Strategic monitoring and messaging efforts to detect and counteract mis- and disinformation campaigns will continue to be vital to dismantle election sabotage efforts. The rise of new technology and rapid growth of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies will make these efforts increasingly vital. The strength of our democracy depends on trust in our elections.
ARE YOU PREPARED TO VOTE?

Polls open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

bit.ly/AlVoteInfo

ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?

VOTE have (1) fully completed the sentence, including any
Receive up to two more ballots
to the county clerk.

out the application with a pen.

bit.ly/AlAbsenteeManager

Tuesday, October 11
HERE

bit.ly/TXRegistrationStatus

Know Your Rights!
What if I don't have one of these IDs?
Receive free voter ID card
What if I don't have one of these IDs?
 bit.ly/AlVoterId

FREE Voter ID card

What if I don't have one of these IDs?

bit.ly/SCregister2Vote

Non-driver ID, or photo voter ID

bit.ly/SCRegStatus

Know Your Rights!
What if I don't have one of these IDs?

What if I don't have one of these IDs?

bit.ly/TXAbs

INI

Your Prepared-to-Vote Checklist

bit.ly/TXRegistrationStatus

School Board (in Board of Supervisors) Seat

bit.ly/LaVoteInPerson

What if I don't have one of these IDs?

LFD's Voting Rights Microsite

Find a sample ballot for your parish at

What if I don't have one of these IDs?

bit.ly/Laoft

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What if I don...
The Legal Defense Fund (LDF) is America’s premier legal organization fighting for racial justice. Using the power of law, narrative, research, and people, we defend and advance the full dignity and citizenship of Black people in America.

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