



Federal policy on voting issues, 2017-2018

DONALD TRUMP ▾ CABINET ▾ EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS ▾ FEDERAL POLICIES ▾

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On May 11, 2017, President Donald Trump established the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity. According to a White House press release, the commission was created to “study vulnerabilities in voting systems used for federal elections that could lead to improper voter registrations, improper voting, fraudulent voter registrations, and fraudulent voting.” It was also created to “study concerns about voter suppression, as well as other voting irregularities” by utilizing “all available data, including state and federal databases.”^{[1][2]}

According to the *Chicago Tribune*, at least nine lawsuits were filed against the commission seeking to make their processes more transparent and prevent the federal government from accessing states' voter data.^[3]

The commission was dissolved on January 3, 2018. White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders explained the decision to dissolve the commission in the following statement: "Despite substantial evidence of voter fraud, many states have refused to provide the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity with basic information relevant to its inquiry. Rather than engage in endless legal battles at taxpayer expense, today President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order to dissolve the Commission, and he has asked the Department of Homeland Security to review its initial findings and determine next courses of action."^[4]

After the commission was dissolved, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) said in a statement, "The commission never had anything to do with election integrity. It was instead a front to suppress the vote, perpetrate dangerous and baseless claims, and was ridiculed from one end of the country to the other. This shows that ill-founded proposals that just appeal to a narrow group of people won't work, and we hope they'll learn this lesson elsewhere."^[3]

Trump Administration



President Donald Trump
Vice President Mike Pence

Cabinet • Transition team

The commission was created in response to Trump's claim that 3 to 5 million ballots were illegally cast in 2016 presidential election, although he did not provide evidence to support the claim.^[5]

This page tracked major events and policy positions of the Trump administration and the 115th United States Congress on voting from 2017 and 2018. This page was updated through 2018. Think something is missing? Please email us at editor@ballotpedia.org.

Click on the timeline below to learn more about each headline.

- **September 12, 2018:** Trump signs executive order on election interference
- **August 7, 2017:** DOJ files amicus brief in support of purging infrequent voters from voter rolls
- **May 11, 2017:** Trump signs executive order establishing Election Integrity Commission
- **June 28, 2017:** Commission requests for voter information
- State responses to Election Integrity Commission data requests
- **January 3, 2018:** Trump dissolves commission

September 12, 2018: Trump signs executive order on election interference

On September 12, 2018, President Donald Trump signed an executive order that allowed sanctions to be placed on individuals and entities who interfere with U.S. elections. Under the order, the director of national intelligence is responsible for investigating allegations of interference. The Departments of Justice and of Homeland Security are then responsible for imposing sanctions if necessary. Sanctions could include cutting off access to the U.S. financial system, denial of entrance into the country, and the freezing of assets, among other things.^[6]

“By signing this Executive Order, I am adding to my record of implementing the strongest measures to date of any United States President to protect our electoral system. As we enter election season this fall, the American people can rest assured that we are working diligently to ensure that our democracy remains secure from foreign threats,” Trump said in a statement.^[7]

In a joint statement, Sens. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), who proposed legislation to prevent election interference, criticized the order for not doing enough to prevent and punish election meddling by foreign actors. They said, “Today’s announcement by the

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administration recognizes the threat, but does not go far enough to address it. Mandatory sanctions on anyone who attacks our electoral systems serve as the best deterrent, which is the central tenet of the bipartisan Deter Act.”^[8]

Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.), chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, praised the order, saying it “sends a clear message that America can and will respond swiftly and decisively to Russia, Iran and any others who seek to undermine our free, fair and open elections.”^[8]

August 7, 2017: DOJ files amicus brief in support of purging infrequent voters from voter rolls

On August 7, 2017, the Justice Department filed an amicus brief in *Husted v. A. Philip Randolph Institute*, supporting Ohio's policy of purging voters who had not cast a ballot in six or more years from registration rolls. The Sixth Circuit ruled in 2016 that this policy violated the 1993 National Voter Registration Act, and the case was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.^[9]

The U.S. Supreme Court decided on June 11, 2018, that Ohio's list does not violate the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) or the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA).^[10]

May 11, 2017: Trump signs executive order establishing Election Integrity Commission

See also: State government responses to the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity

On May 11, 2017, President Donald Trump signed an executive order establishing the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity and announcing Vice President Mike Pence as the commission's chairman. The order established the following purpose for the committee:^[2]

- “ The Commission shall, consistent with applicable law, study the registration and voting processes used in Federal elections. The Commission shall be solely advisory and shall submit a report to the President that identifies the following:
- (a) those laws, rules, policies, activities, strategies, and practices that enhance the American people's confidence in the integrity of the voting processes used in Federal elections;
 - (b) those laws, rules, policies, activities, strategies, and practices that undermine the American people's confidence in the integrity of the voting processes used in Federal elections; and
 - (c) those vulnerabilities in voting systems and practices used for Federal elections that could lead to improper voter registrations and improper voting, including fraudulent voter registrations and fraudulent voting. ^[11]
- ”

The same day he signed the order, Trump appointed Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach (R) as the commission's co-chair.^[12]

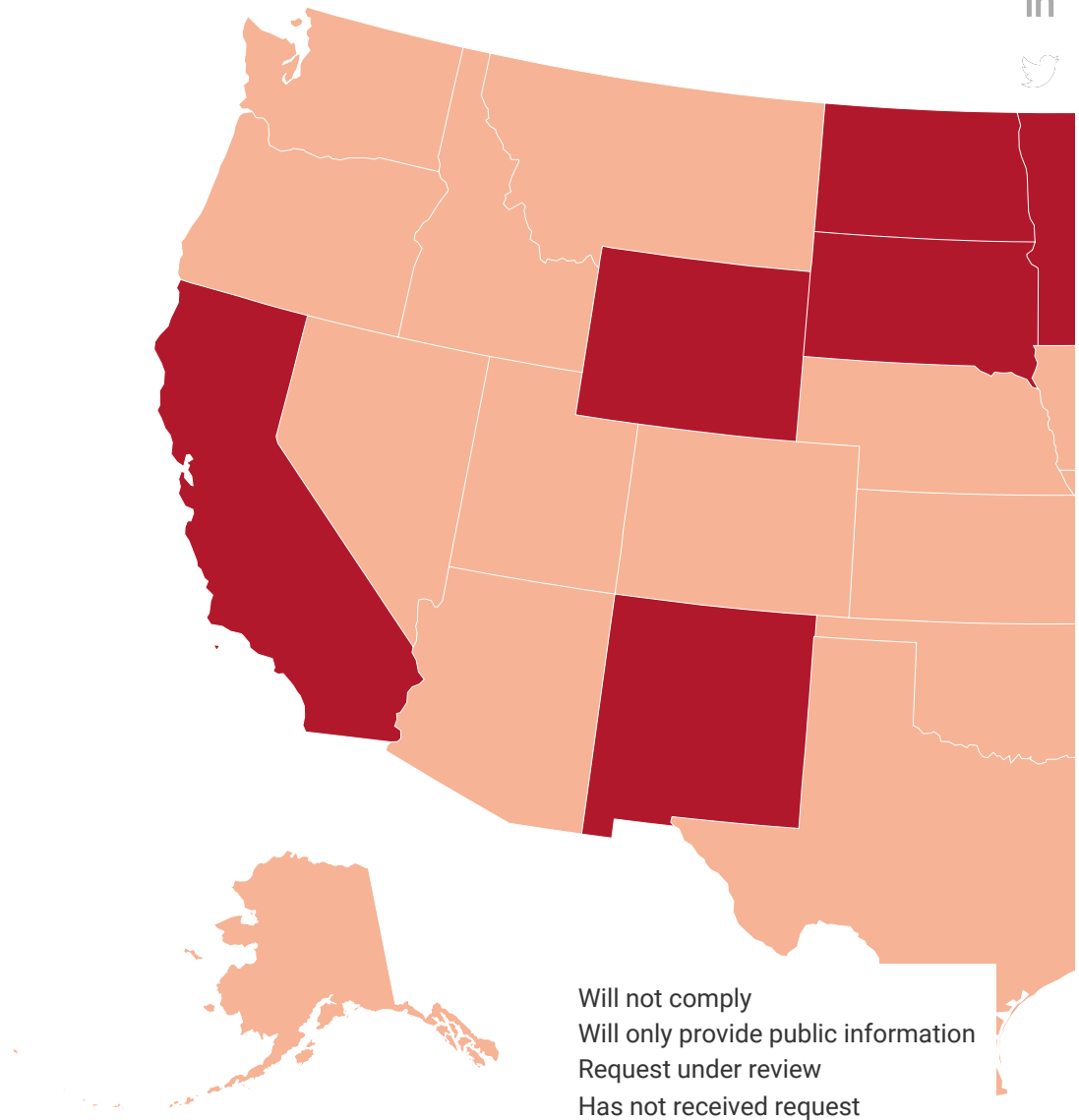
June 28, 2017: Commission requests for voter information

On June 28, 2017, the commission requested that all 50 states and Washington, D.C., provide the commission with voter information. According to *Business Insider*, the commission asked states for "registered voters' names, addresses, dates of birth, partial social security numbers, political party, a decade's worth of voter history, information on felony convictions, and whether they have registered in more than one state."^[13] A second request for information was submitted on July 26, 2017.^[14]

State responses to Election Integrity Commission data requests

Map: First request Details on state responses **Map: Second request**

State responses to Election Integrity Commission data request, July 2017



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Read more on state responses to the commission's requests here.

January 3, 2018: Trump dissolves commission

On January 3, 2018, President Donald Trump signed an executive order dissolving the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity. White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said in a statement, "Despite substantial evidence of voter fraud, many states have refused to provide the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity with basic information relevant to its inquiry. Rather than engage in endless legal battles at taxpayer expense, today President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order to dissolve the Commission, and he has asked the Department of Homeland Security to review its initial findings and determine next courses of action."^[4]

On August 29, 2018, *The News Tribune* reported that voter data collected by the commission had been destroyed and cases related to data collection had been dismissed.^[26]

To see how states responded requests made by the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity, [click here](#).

See also

- Voting Policy
- State government responses to the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity

External links

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Footnotes

1. *WhiteHouse.gov*, "President Announces Formation of Bipartisan Presidential Commission on Election Integrity," May 11, 2017

2. *The White House*, "Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity," July 13, 2017

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