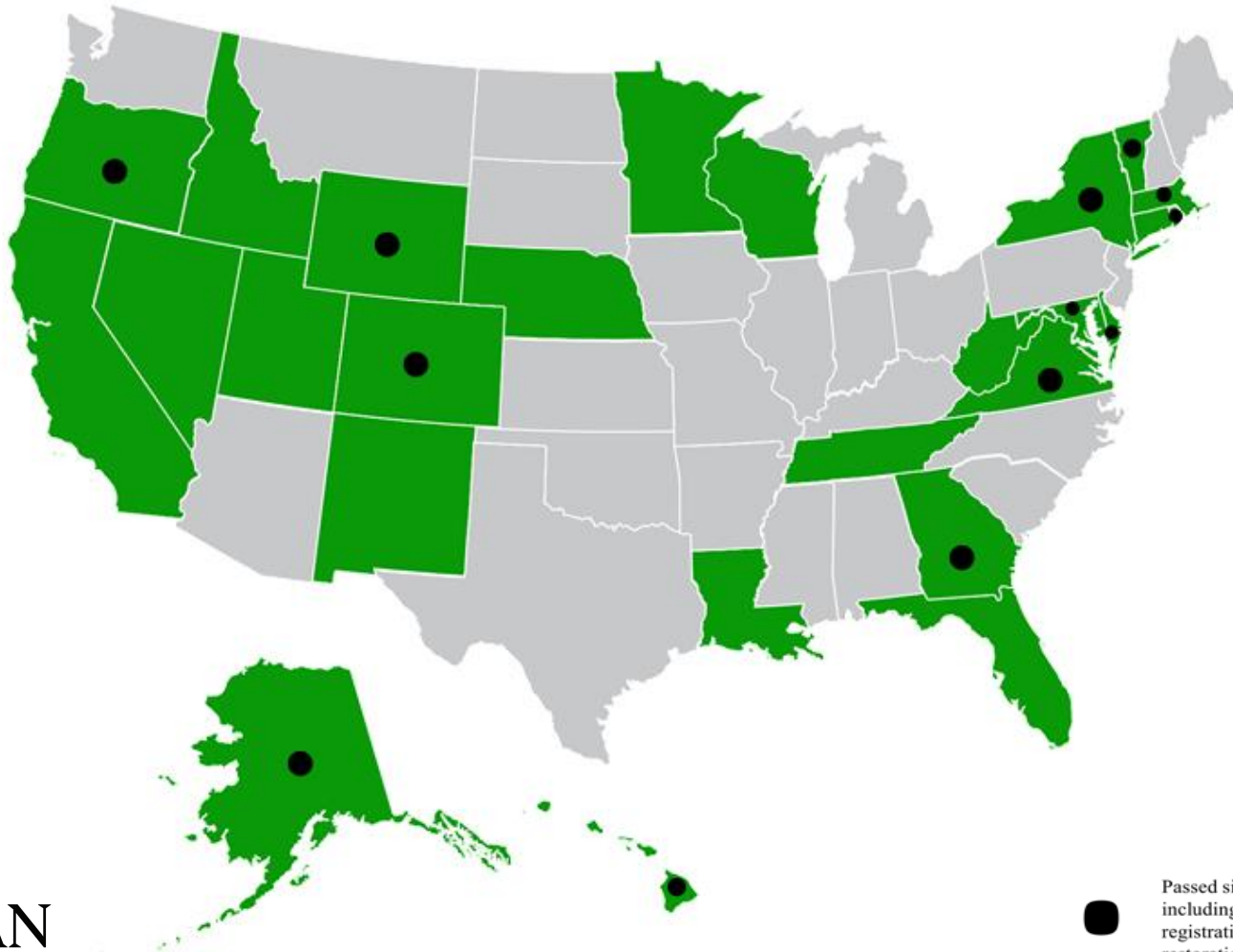


Major Expansions to Voting Access (2013-June 2018)



● Passed significant voting reforms, including AVR, election-day registration, early voting, and rights restoration.

Major Expansions to Voting Access (as of 2013 – June 2018)

While many states have moved to restrict their citizens' access to the ballot in the past decade, others have expanded access to their voting process. These recent pro-voter victories formed an important part of the overall voting landscape going into 2018. Most significantly, new automatic voter registration (AVR) systems will be in place in seven states and the District of Columbia, five of them for the first time.

New Laws in Place

- Five states — Alaska, California, Colorado, Rhode Island, and Vermont — and the District of Columbia will have automatic voter registration (AVR) in place for the first time in the lead-up to a federal election. In total, seven states and the District of Columbia will have up-and-running AVR systems prior to the 2018 elections, including Georgia and Oregon, which implemented AVR in advance of the 2016 elections. (Two additional states are scheduled to, but may not have, AVR in place by the 2018 elections, and three states will not implement the reform until after the election.) AVR is transformative, yet simple: When eligible citizens visit a government office, such as a state's department of motor vehicles, they are automatically registered to vote unless they decline.
- Three more states have enacted AVR laws: Maryland, New Jersey, and Washington. That brings the total number of states that have adopted AVR to 12 plus the District of Columbia.
- AVR could significantly increase the number of people who register and vote in these states this November. In Oregon, which adopted AVR in 2016, the rate of new registrations at the department of motor vehicles quadrupled, and the overall registration rate jumped by nearly 10 percent after it was implemented. Many of these new registrants turned out to vote. While Oregon had no competitive statewide races, its voter turnout increased by 4 percent in 2016, which was 2.5 percentage points higher than the national average.
- AVR is a rare voting reform to have garnered broad bipartisan support. For example, West Virginia's largely Republican Legislature passed an AVR bill, and its Democratic governor signed it into law; conversely, Illinois's Democratic-majority Legislature passed AVR with unanimous support, and its Republican governor signed it into law. Alaskans passed AVR via ballot initiative with nearly 65 percent of the vote in 2016, the same year they gave Donald Trump a 15-point victory over Hillary Clinton.
- Also, thousands of New Yorkers who had previously lost their voting rights because of a criminal conviction could newly be eligible to vote as a result of an executive order that Gov. Andrew Cuomo issued in April, indicating he will restore voting rights to certain New Yorkers on parole. As of May 2018, approximately 24,000 New Yorkers have had their voting rights restored, and there are plans to restore voting rights on a monthly basis going forward.
 - In Louisiana, Gov. John Bel Edwards recently signed a law restoring voting rights to individuals on probation and parole if they have been out of prison at least 5 years. According to state officials, this reform could enfranchise roughly 2,000 citizens of Louisiana, but it will not take effect until 2019.
 - Since the 2016 elections, three other states have also expanded the right to vote for the formerly incarcerated. In Virginia, right before the last election, voting rights were restored with great fanfare to more than 61,000 citizens, but not until after the voter

registration deadline had passed for the 2016 election. This will be the first federal election in which those citizens can vote. In Alabama, the Legislature passed clarifying legislation that had the effect of reducing the number of crimes for which citizens can be disenfranchised. And in Nevada, the governor signed a law restoring voting rights to those who committed certain crimes and previously would have been permanently disenfranchised; that law will not go into effect until January 2019.

- Florida is seriously considering a significant reform that could add to that total. Its citizens, as explained below, have collected enough signatures to qualify a referendum for the ballot that would end the state's lifetime ban on voting for individuals with criminal convictions. This reform will not affect the composition of the electorate in November.
- More broadly, compared to the 2016 election, at least 16 states will have implemented significant new laws that will make it easier to register or vote this year. This count includes states that passed laws before November 2016 but did not put them into effect for the 2016 election. (Since we started tracking legislation expanding voting access in 2013, 25 states and the District of Columbia have implemented significant reforms expanding access, and four states have eased their ID requirements for voting or registration.) In addition to the AVR and rights restoration laws discussed above, these reforms include same-day and election-day registration, online voter registration, and expanded early voting opportunities. On-line registration is among the most common reforms implemented in the past two years — five states implemented online registration, bringing the total number of states with online registration to 37 plus the District of Columbia (Oklahoma has enacted online registration, but does not expect to implement it until 2020.) This reform, which was a major innovation last decade and early into this one, is now the norm. Beyond the states that have implemented reforms, other states, like Washington, have enacted pro-voter reforms that will not be in effect this year.