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NEW JERSEY 2023 ELECTION GUIDE

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VOTE YOUR VALUES AND BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, a rising social and political reckoning has led voters to think deeply about the values that guide their lives.

With every single seat in the New Jersey Legislature up for election this fall, turnout will be essential – and the stakes couldn't be higher.

After a tumultuous year that brought renewed attacks on civil rights and civil liberties, it is time to vote with the gravity that these challenges demand – and with the hope of a brighter future we all deserve, because our vision for a fairer, more just New Jersey remains resolute.

We know that the issues that affect us most are shaped by casting your ballot in state and local elections. That means the votes cast this November will have a lasting impact on all New Jerseyans' lives.

The ACLU-NJ's 2023 election guide highlights our most pressing civil rights priorities to help you vote your values and to make sure elected officials – who have the power and responsibility to advance inclusive, meaningful change – are held accountable to their constituents.

Participating in elections is imperative to shaping the future of our state. Your vote has the power to push our elected leaders to overhaul policing, address the rampant racism that plagues our criminal legal system, and ensure accessibility to abortion care.

When it comes time to cast your ballot this fall, you will decide what our future holds – we hope you vote like your rights depend on it.

Onward,



AMOL SINHA
Executive Director



ABORTION ACCESS FOR ALL



WHAT TO CONSIDER AT THE POLLS: New Jerseyans need expansion and protection of access to abortion care.

When the U.S. Supreme Court issued its devastating ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* that eliminated federal constitutional protections for abortion rights, it emboldened anti-abortion politicians across the country to strip access to abortion from millions of people.

While abortion remains legal in New Jersey, many people cannot access the reproductive care they need because New Jersey lawmakers have not addressed the barriers that push care out of reach for too many in our state, especially communities of color, immigrants, LGBTQ+ communities, and people who are low-income.

To begin dismantling these barriers, New Jersey lawmakers must take immediate action to expand access to abortion in our state by passing the Reproductive Equity Act (REA).

If signed into law, the Reproductive Equity Act will:

- ✓ Mandate private insurers to cover abortion care with no out-of-pocket costs to the patient.
- ✓ Establish a program to support the costs of abortion care for people who are uninsured or underinsured, including undocumented community members.
- ✓ Support existing abortion providers and take steps to expand the number of providers in the state.
- ✓ Codify regulations that authorize health care professionals in New Jersey to provide abortion care.
- ✓ Enact protections for providers and patients seeking abortion care.

By making the REA law, New Jersey can guarantee that abortion is not just legal, but accessible and affordable for all, regardless of insurance, immigration status, or income. **When you vote, vote for reproductive freedom.**

TRANSFORMING POLICING AS WE KNOW IT



WHAT TO CONSIDER AT THE POLLS: To help end police misconduct and stop the injustices inflicted on those who experience it, New Jersey must rein in police powers and redirect funds toward programs that empower and protect our communities.

Despite years of united calls from advocates across the state, New Jersey legislators have yet to address harmful police practices, instead opting to further criminalize communities that have been harmed by years of over-policing.

Bills that will begin to transform policing as we know it – by building civilian complaint review boards with subpoena power or by establishing real transparency of police records – have languished in the Legislature since the murder of George Floyd. This is what happens when the voices of police lobbyists and law enforcement associations are prioritized over impacted communities.

We know this inaction is morally unacceptable and comes at an immeasurable human cost. It must not continue. Holding elected officials accountable is imperative to manifesting wholesale change in policing and advancing meaningful legislation that has been stalled in both houses:

- ✓ A996/S371: Makes police disciplinary records public to end secrecy around officer misconduct which undermines trust, undercuts accountability, and harms communities.
- ✓ A1515/S2295: Allows for meaningful civilian oversight over police misconduct through local Civilian Complaint Review Boards with subpoena powers and true investigatory authority.
- ✓ A1006: Ends qualified immunity, a legal principle that makes it nearly impossible to hold police accountable in civil court when they use excessive force, commit crimes, or even kill people.
- ✓ A5326: Establishes a Community Crisis Response Advisory Council and a community crisis response teams pilot program, proven to be effective tools in violence interruption and limiting unnecessary interactions with police.
- ✓ A1370: Criminalizes police use of chokeholds, a particularly violent tactic that's banned in police forces across the country.
- ✓ A866/S2166: Limits the use of deadly force by police.

These policies are long-overdue and represent just a part of the wholesale change in law enforcement approaches our country needs. **When you vote, vote to transform policing.**

OUR VOTE, OUR POWER



WHAT TO CONSIDER AT THE POLLS: New Jersey must expand access to the polls and increase resources that will help people vote.

As one of the most diverse states in the country, New Jersey must be a national leader in strengthening and expanding voting rights and dismantling barriers to the ballot that disproportionately impact communities historically disenfranchised by voter suppression tactics.

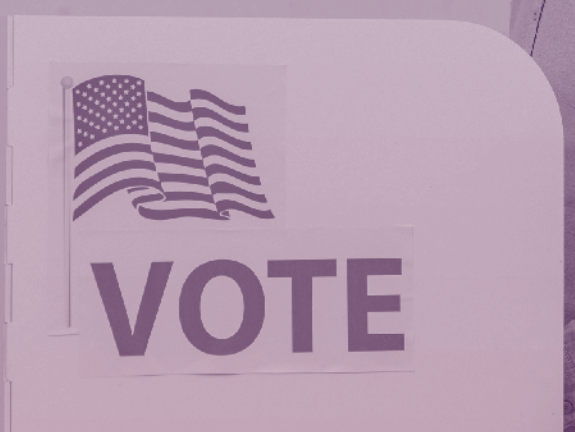
To strengthen New Jersey's democracy, lawmakers must take action by passing the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of New Jersey (NJVRA) to protect and expand access to the ballot for all residents, especially people of color who experience widespread and longstanding discrimination in voting.

If signed into law, the NJVRA will:

- ✓ Provide new tools to confront existing and evolving barriers to voting.
- ✓ Root out discriminatory election practices.
- ✓ Promote election transparency.
- ✓ Increase language access and assistance.
- ✓ Prohibit intimidation, deception, and obstruction at the polls.

New Jersey needs a democracy that works for ALL of us.

When you vote, vote for a strong democracy.



A FAIR AND WELCOMING NEW JERSEY



WHAT TO CONSIDER AT THE POLLS: With one of the largest immigrant populations in the country, New Jersey must ensure that immigrants have the rights and dignity we are all entitled to.

Far too many immigrant New Jerseyans and their families live in fear that a routine interaction with law enforcement, a visit to the emergency room, or even a school drop-off will result in separation from their loved ones and deportation.

To build a truly fair and welcoming state for all people – regardless of immigration status – New Jersey must end its participation in the federal detention and deportation machine by passing the Values Act.

If signed into law, the Values Act will:

- ✓ Prohibit state and local law enforcement from cooperating with federal immigration authorities in instances when doing so is voluntary under federal law.
- ✓ Ensure that local resources are used to support local priorities rather than fund federal immigration enforcement.
- ✓ Eliminate carve-outs in the Immigrant Trust Directive that exclude immigrants entangled in the criminal legal system and disproportionately harm Black and brown New Jerseyans due to racial disparities in policing and prosecution.
- ✓ Protect personal information by limiting the data that public agencies – including hospitals and public schools – can collect.
- ✓ Require public schools, health care facilities, libraries, and shelters to adopt model policies to ensure that people feel safer seeking public services they are eligible to access.
- ✓ Build transparency and confidence in law enforcement through reporting requirements.

We need our lawmakers to support immigrant communities through policies that recognize the rights and dignity of all New Jerseyans. **When you vote, vote for immigrants' rights.**

WHAT YOU CAN DO



VOTE: New Jersey's 2023 election will be held on Tuesday, November 7. Early voting begins Saturday, October 28 and continues through Sunday, November 5. For more information on how to vote, visit aclu-nj.org/voting.

Democracy doesn't begin and end during election season. It requires us to hold our officials accountable and build strength in our communities throughout their time in office.

Here are some important ways to make an impact that can be just as important as voting:

- ✔ **Contact your elected officials**
This really does make a difference. Lawmakers keep track of how many people contact their offices about particular issues. Lawmakers have even shifted their position on issues once they recognized the level of public support – or public opposition. Reaching out to your elected officials is an opportunity to urge them to support the issues you care about – and to hold them accountable for their actions.
- ✔ **Join ACLU People Power**
People Power is the ACLU's national platform for grassroots activism. When you sign up, you have access to events and actions all over the country – including in New Jersey – where you can make your voice heard. Sign up here: peoplepower.org.
- ✔ **Attend a protest or rally**
The people united can never be defeated! And together our voices ring out more loudly. Protests show the strength of your cause, put pressure on elected officials, and create opportunities to connect with like-minded people. Our First Amendment stays strong when you exercise it.
- ✔ **Attend public meetings of local government, and request public records**
“Of the people, by the people, for the people” aren't just words. They're instructions for how our government should operate. You have the right to see what your lawmakers do, including attending and speaking at public meetings, and requesting government records. You have the right to participate, and the right to know!

Want to get involved with the ACLU-NJ directly?

Sign up to receive our emails here: action.aclu.org/signup/nj-email-updates or contact info@aclu-nj.org.

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