

Operational and Communications Toolkit for Mass Voter Challenges



Elections officials are increasingly encountering organized, broadly-scoped efforts to challenge the legitimacy of voter registrations and voter rolls. This generic, nonpartisan resource offers best practices on how to receive, process, and respond to these mass voter challenges, as well as starter templates for [social media](#), [news releases](#), and [voter-facing information](#). These can be easily adapted for any election office and provide a starting place for nonpartisan communication with voters about ballot issues. Keep in mind, these are just samples and guides. Nothing in this document is intended to be legal advice. We encourage you to adapt them to your jurisdiction’s needs, to make them your own, and to consult your state, county, or city attorney where necessary.

Operational Response Best Practices

This Operational Response Template outlines the steps that election officials can take to help ensure quick and comprehensive responses to mass voter challenges as they arise. These guidelines are based on best practices, and are organized based on the situation and audience. The “preparation” section of this document is especially important, because there are statutory periods for when voters can and cannot be systematically removed from voter rolls.

Planning Phase	Steps to Consider
Preparation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="383 957 651 989">1. Understand the Law.<ul data-bbox="431 1024 1479 1276" style="list-style-type: none">● Contact your state or county attorney for advice, deadlines, and other critical information related to these challenges.● Create a short reference document for your team, which has the relevant laws and timelines written out and/or links to the legal language.● Ensure that your team is well-versed in federal, state, and local laws regarding list maintenance and voter challenges. Familiarize yourself with the legal grounds for challenges and the procedural requirements, like this guidance from the Department of Justice: https://www.justice.gov/crt/media/1366561/dl<li data-bbox="383 1310 651 1341">2. Establish a Protocol.<ul data-bbox="431 1377 1495 1562" style="list-style-type: none">● Create a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Develop a clear SOP for how your office will handle mass voter challenges, outlining each step in the process. The SOP is intended to reduce decision-making time at the moment of a challenge. It should name who will be the designated point person for media contact, phone calls/emails from the public, etc.● Train Staff: Conduct training sessions for all relevant staff members to ensure they understand the SOP and are prepared to handle challenges efficiently and fairly.<li data-bbox="383 1596 854 1627">3. Prepare materials for media inquiries.<ul data-bbox="431 1663 1471 1814" style="list-style-type: none">● Write a holding statement that can quickly be released to the media.● Prepare talking points that explain how your office prepared for and is currently addressing the issue.● Decide who will speak to the media (elected official, PIO, SME etc.) and practice talking points regularly

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Operational Response Best Practices

Below is a list of starter steps to consider as you navigate polling place closures. They are organized based on the situation and timing of the issue. "Preparation" includes steps you can take now to be well-situated for unexpected changes.

Planning Phase	Steps to Consider
Mass Voter Challenge Received	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Receive and Log Challenges:<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Begin documentation of all steps taken and decisions made.● Accept Formal Challenges: Ensure that all challenges are submitted in writing. Record the date and time of each submission.● Verify Completeness and Timeliness: Quickly check that each challenge submission includes all required information and supporting evidence as mandated by law and is submitted within the prescribed timeline, if there is one.● Engage legal counsel/compliance officers.2. Initial Screening:<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Preliminary Review: Conduct an initial review of each challenge to filter out those that are incomplete or not compliant with legal requirements.● Notify Challengers: Inform the challengers of any deficiencies in their submissions and provide a short timeframe for correction according to legal guidelines. If the challenge is made outside of a legally prescribed timeline, notify the challenger that you cannot accept the challenge and refer them to the appropriate legal citation.● Consult your state or local attorney as necessary to navigate requirements and steps.3. Investigate Challenges:<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Data Verification: Rapidly cross-check the challenged voter registrations against your voter rolls and other relevant databases (e.g., DMV records, property records).● Field Investigation: If necessary, conduct expedited field investigations to verify residency or other eligibility criteria.4. Notify Affected Voters:<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Send Notifications: Immediately inform voters whose registrations are being challenged. Provide details of the challenge and the required steps to contest it.● Explain Rights: Ensure voters understand their rights and the process for contesting the challenge, including deadlines and required documentation.5. Make Determinations:<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Evaluate Evidence: Whether it is panels, hearings, or individual reviews, as examples, follow the federal/state/locally-required process to review all evidence gathered during the investigation.● Issue Decisions: Make determinations on each challenge based on the evidence and in accordance with the law. Provide written explanations for each decision.● Consult your state or local attorney as necessary.

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	<p>6. Update Voter Rolls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Modify Registrations: Rapidly update voter rolls to reflect the outcomes of the challenges, whether it results in affirming or removing voter registrations. ● Maintain Records: Keep detailed records of all challenges and outcomes for future reference and transparency. <p>7. Inform Affected Voters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Detailed Notifications: Quickly send detailed notifications to affected voters, explaining the outcome of the challenge and any actions they need to take. ● Support Channels: Provide contact information and support channels for voters to seek assistance or clarification.
<p>Communication with the Media and Non-Affected Voters</p>	<p>Ensure that all communications are transparent, clear, and informative to maintain public trust.</p> <p>1. Notify the Media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Release a statement - or hold a news conference - explaining the challenge, how your office responded, the number of people affected, and any other relevant details. ● Make clear who the official spokespeople are and which social network accounts are the official accounts, and that voters should seek out information from official channels. <p>2. Communicate with the Public (non-affected voters):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular Updates: Provide frequent updates to the public about the status and outcomes of mass voter challenges through news releases, social media, and the official website. Reassure voters that they will be able to cast their ballots. ● As much as possible, try to provide updates at the same times, places, and platform locations (i.e., Twitter handles, zoom conference call addresses, etc.).
<p>Post-Election Review</p>	<p>1. Evaluate and Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct a thorough review of the challenge and the response. ● Gather feedback from election staff, volunteers, consulted attorneys, and voters to identify any issues or areas for improvement. <p>2. Document Lessons Learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update the SOP based on the experience and feedback. ● Ensure all changes are documented and communicated to relevant personnel.

Mass Voter Challenges Social Media Templates

Here are some sample social media posts addressing mass challenges to voter eligibility. They can be adapted based on the urgency of the situation. These may also be used on other platforms you use to reach community members, like Nextdoor.

Platform	Sample Text
Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">🗳️ Attention Voters! 🗳️ We've received a mass voter eligibility challenge in our jurisdiction. We're reviewing these claims and taking steps to protect eligible voters' rights & the integrity of the election. Confirm your registration status at [Your Website]. #Election2024 #VoterRights
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none">🗳️ Attention Voters! 🗳️ <p>Our office has recently notified the media about a mass challenge to voter eligibility in our jurisdiction. We understand this may cause concern, but please rest assured that we are diligently reviewing every claim to ensure the rights of all eligible voters are protected, and to maintain the integrity of the election.</p> <p>As always, you can check your registration status and polling place by visiting [Your Website]. Stay informed and feel free to reach out to us with any questions. #Election2024 #VoterRights #StayInformed</p>
Instagram	<ul style="list-style-type: none">🗳️ Attention Voters! 🗳️ <p>We recently notified the media about a mass challenge to voter eligibility in our jurisdiction. We understand this may cause concern, but please rest assured that we are diligently reviewing every claim to ensure the rights of all eligible voters are protected, and to maintain the integrity of the election.</p> <p>As always, you can check your registration status and polling place by visiting [Your Website]. Stay informed and feel free to reach out to us with any questions.</p> <p>#Election2024 #VoterRights #StayInformed #YourVoteMatters</p>
LinkedIn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">🗳️ Attention Voters! 🗳️ <p>We recently notified the media about a mass challenge to voter eligibility in our jurisdiction. We understand this may cause concern, but be assured that we are diligently reviewing every claim to ensure the rights of all eligible voters are protected, and to maintain the integrity of the election. Our office is committed to transparency during this process.</p> <p>To ensure you're prepared for Election Day, check your registration status and polling place by visiting [Your Website]. Stay informed and feel free to reach out to us with any questions.</p> <p>#Election2024 #VoterRights #StayInformed #ElectionIntegrity</p>

For more examples of social media posts and other sample content, reference the Elections Assistance Commission's "[Election Official Social Media Toolkit](#)".

Mass Voter Challenges

Sample News Release Template



This generic news release template is a starting point to help you provide public guidance about mass voter challenges. This is customizable for your jurisdiction. The [Blue](#) text notes places where jurisdiction specific text is particularly important. It's a best practice to keep news releases to one page or two at most.

CONTACT

[\[Your Name\]](#)
[\[Your Title\]](#)
[\[County Elections Office\]](#)
[\[Phone Number\]](#)
[\[Email Address\]](#)
[\[Date\]](#)



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Addresses Mass Voter Challenge: Steps Taken to Protect Electoral Integrity

[\[City, State\]](#) - [\[Date\]](#) - [\[Your Office Name\]](#) received a mass voter challenge questioning the eligibility of a significant number of registered voters in our jurisdiction.

Immediate Response and Thorough Review

On [\[Date\]](#), our office received a mass voter challenge via [\[method of submission, e.g., mail, email, in-person submission\]](#). The challenge was submitted by [\[group, person\]](#). Upon receipt, we initiated a comprehensive review process. [\[Describe the process in your jurisdiction, for example, "This involves verifying the eligibility of each challenged voter."\]](#) Our team is dedicated to ensuring the integrity of the electoral process while safeguarding the rights of all eligible voters.

Impact on the Electorate

We want to assure the public and the media that the integrity of our election is paramount - as is upholding the ability of all *eligible* voters to participate in the electoral process. Affected voters will be notified immediately, with clear instructions on how to confirm their eligibility. Our objective is to resolve these challenges efficiently, minimizing disruption and maintaining voter confidence.

To mitigate any potential confusion, we also encourage all voters to proactively verify their registration status and polling place ahead of Election Day. Voters can confirm their registration and polling location by visiting [\[Your Website\]](#) or contacting our office at [\[Phone Number\]](#) or [\[Email Address\]](#). Staying informed will help ensure a seamless voting experience.

Media Inquiries and Further Information

Members of the media seeking more information on the voter challenge process or wishing to discuss the steps being taken by our office are encouraged to contact us directly. We are available to provide detailed information and answer any questions regarding this situation.

About [\[Your Office Name\]](#)

[\[Your Office Name\]](#) is dedicated to conducting fair and transparent elections. We strive to provide accurate information and unwavering support to all voters, ensuring that every eligible voter can exercise their democratic rights.

Mass Voter Challenges

Voter-Facing Information Template



Here is an example of a generic, *conversational* resource on what voters may need to know about mass voter challenges. **Blue text** denotes places where jurisdiction specific information is particularly important, though the entire resource is customizable for your jurisdiction.

Voter Information on Mass Voter Challenges



Greetings Voter,

Mass Voter Challenges occur when large numbers of voter registrations are contested at once. Our office is equally dedicated to preserving the integrity of the election, and upholding the right of all eligible citizens to participate in the electoral process, so we are careful to follow the existing legal processes for receiving, reviewing, and processing these challenges.

How Our Office Will Respond

1. **Review Process:** When a mass voter challenge is filed, the Election Office carefully reviews each challenged registration. This ensures that only valid challenges are acted upon.
2. **Notification:** If your registration is challenged, you will receive a notification from the Election Office. This notification will explain the reason for the challenge and provide instructions on how to respond.
3. **Hearing:** In some cases, a hearing may be held to determine the validity of the challenge. You have the right to attend this hearing and provide evidence to support your eligibility to vote.
4. **Resolution:** The Election Office will make a determination based on the evidence presented. If the challenge is upheld, you will be informed of the steps needed to correct your registration status.

What You Can Do

1. **Check Your Registration:** Regularly verify your voter registration status to ensure your information is up-to-date. Visit [\[insert website\]](#) for registration verification.
2. **Respond Promptly:** If you receive a notification that your registration is being challenged, follow the instructions provided and respond promptly to resolve any issues.
3. **Know Your Rights:** Educate yourself about your rights as a voter. You have the right to be informed of any challenges to your registration and to respond to those challenges.
4. **Seek Assistance:** If you need help responding to a challenge or understanding the process, contact the Election Office or a non-partisan voter assistance organization.

How Mass Voter Challenges May Affect You

Potential Delays: If your registration is challenged, there might be a delay in processing your voting status. It's important to respond promptly to any notifications from the Election Office.

Provisional Ballots: If your registration status is still being resolved on Election Day, you may be asked to vote using a provisional ballot. This ballot will be counted once your eligibility is confirmed.

Contact Us: For any questions or concerns, contact the [\[County/City\]](#) Election Office at:

- **Phone:** [\[Phone Number\]](#)
- **Email:** [\[Email Address\]](#)
- **Website:** [\[Website URL\]](#)