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Contact: press@mikebloomberg.com



MIKE BLOOMBERG RELEASES PLAN TO EXPAND VOTING ACCESS AND ENSURE ALL AMERICANS' VOTES ARE COUNTED

Plan Would Combat President Trump's Efforts to Undermine Democratic Process by Expanding Voting Rights, Blocking States from Disenfranchising African Americans

ATLANTA, GEORGIA – January 10, 2020 — Democratic presidential candidate Mike Bloomberg unveiled a comprehensive plan to expand voting rights and ensure Americans can have their votes counted in federal elections. Bloomberg introduced the voting rights policy as he traveled to Georgia, where in 2018 the Secretary of State took steps to disenfranchise African Americans. The plan includes four key pillars for federal elections: Protecting voting rights for all Americans; promoting fair elections and eliminating partisan influence; making sure that all eligible voters are able to easily register and cast their ballots; and ensuring the security and integrity of federal elections.

“The right to vote is the fundamental right that protects all of the others, but in states around the country, it is under attack,” said Mike Bloomberg. “That's a disgrace to our Constitution and an insult to generations of people who fought and marched to win the right to vote. We need to end voter suppression once and for all. That's why I've made such a big commitment to registering voters around the country. And it's why as president, I will support a new national Voting Rights Act that requires states to conduct automatic voter registration and adopt other reforms - like early voting - that improve access to the ballot in federal elections.”

President Trump never misses an opportunity to undermine the American voter system. He has repeatedly declared the 2016 election as “rigged” and has made numerous unsupported claims that millions of people, including many undocumented immigrants, have been voting illegally. Trump's discriminatory ways were evident when his voting

commission asked to see Texas records that identified all voters with Hispanic surnames. His voter fraud commission was dissolved after several lawsuits and states refused to turn over voter information.

The centerpiece of Mike's plan is a series of initiatives designed to tackle the racial disparity in voting rights --- for example, nearly 8% of Black adults are prevented from voting due to past convictions, four times the rate of other Americans. There are currently 36 states which require voters to show some form of ID at the polls, disproportionately affecting Black and Latino voters, Native Americans, transgender individuals, and others.

“Being able to cast your ballot for the candidate of your choice is a basic part of any democracy,” said **Former Philadelphia Mayor and Bloomberg Campaign National Political Chair Michael Nutter**. “But, people of color and minorities have traditionally been actively kept out of the franchise. How? Through voter purges, gerrymandering, and biased voter identification requirements that discriminate against these communities. Mike and I both support making voting less discriminatory and more convenient. Mike is all for creating a non-partisan commission that would draft federal voting standards and establish a new Voting Rights Act that protects vulnerable communities. Mike would block voter purges and federally fund a voter rights awareness campaign, so everybody would know their rights and what to do if they feel they are being violated. This is a common sense approach. And, Mike will make sure it gets done.”

“We also need to ensure that our voting process is secure,” Nutter said. “We need to upgrade and standardize our voting machines, ballots and equipment. We need to be vigilant about cybersecurity. Because once we get every American into the franchise, we need to make sure that every vote counts, AND EVERY VOTE IS COUNTED. Mike has never shied away from the challenges. He won't here. He's a doer and he'll work hard to make sure our democracy does a better job of including every American.”

"The fight to expand voting rights in the south - especially for African-Americans - has a champion in Mike Bloomberg," said **Columbia, South Carolina Mayor and Mike Bloomberg 2020 National Co-Chair Steve Benjamin**. "Mike's new Voter Rights plan protects the voting rights of all Americans by making it easier to register to vote, increasing access to and accountability at voting sites, and eliminating partisan gerrymandering. As a mayor in South Carolina, where Voter ID laws have disproportionately impacted African-Americans, I know Mike's leadership will increase the participation in our democratic process."

“Mike Bloomberg’s sweeping voting reform plan would safeguard civil rights through independent redistricting and new VRA protections, and usher in modern election best-practices like early voting and automatic registration, which reduce barriers to participation said **Jarret Berg, Co-Founder of the non-partisan VoteEarlyNY**. “Both parties should be prioritizing these shared American priorities, and Mayor Mike’s leadership is laudable.

“As a leader in women's advocacy focused on generating more viable representatives in American government, I am glad to know there are breakthrough voter reform efforts on the horizon that are groundbreaking to protect diversity and inclusion in the right to vote,” **said Sharon Nelson, CEO and President of C.R.E.Women**. “Universally, the right to vote continues to be elusive for Americans, particularly for Underrepresented populations. A solid and universally accessible Voting Protection Plan can help to repair the value of the voting process to make it more inclusive as it should be.”

Bloomberg will introduce the voting rights policy in remarks at an office organizing rally in Atlanta. In his remarks, Bloomberg will pledge to make voter rights a priority for his campaign.

1. Protect Voting Rights for All Americans. Fix burdensome voting laws and practices that make it more difficult for Black and Latino voters, Asian Americans, Native Americans, transgender people, and people with disabilities to vote in federal elections. Stop voter suppression by banning states from purging eligible voters.

- **Reinvigorate enforcement of the Voting Rights Act** to stop discriminatory state voting laws before they are enacted.
- **Block states from purging voters on the basis of inactivity, incomplete cross-checks, or returned mail.** Between 2016 and 2018, at least 17 million voters were purged nationwide, in some cases simply because they had not voted in consecutive election cycles.
- **Restore voting rights to people with felony convictions, post-incarceration.** In 11 states, individuals with felony convictions lose their right to vote indefinitely. In 21 additional states, those individuals do not immediately regain their right to vote and may be forced to pay onerous fees before full restoration of their rights. Mike’s plan would end those practices.
- **Ensure uniform federal standards for voting state-by-state.** Create a non-partisan commission to set federal standards for voting in federal elections and eliminate disparities across states, including requiring states with voter ID requirements to accept sworn affidavits of eligibility, subject to reasonable verification.

- **Ensure voter protection on Election Day** by expanding the federal observers and election monitoring program within the Department of Justice.
- **Launch a federal campaign to educate the public about voting rights and laws.**

2. Prevent Gerrymandering and Eliminate Partisan Influence in Elections.

Mike Bloomberg supported efforts in 2008 to pass Prop 11 in California, which created a nonpartisan redistricting commission, and Amendments 5 and 6 in the 2010 Florida elections which prohibited partisan gerrymandering and put in place fair criteria for districting.

- **Prevent partisan gerrymandering** by requiring states to establish independent redistricting commissions to draw federal congressional districts in a way that does not give an advantage to one party or group, but reflects the preferences of voters statewide, through a transparent and inclusive process. This is especially important for communities of color that have long been disenfranchised by unfair, partisan redistricting.

3. All Registered Voters Should Be Able to Easily Cast Their Ballots.

Nationwide, there were 15,000 fewer polling places in the 2016 presidential election than in 2008. In order to make it easier for voters to register and get to the polls, Mike would implement uniform standards for federal elections across states, requiring policies like automatic voter registration and early voting, and ensuring the availability and accessibility of polling places.

- **In order to significantly increase voter registration, require same-day, online, and automatic voter registration in every state**, enrolling eligible voters when they first interact with state agencies like the Department of Motor Vehicles.
- **Make voting more convenient by requiring all states to allow early voting**, at least 15 days before Election Day, as well as voting by mail, mailing ballots to voters at least 45 days before an election.
- **Require states to have convenient polling place locations**, near public transportation where possible, implementing federal standards for a sufficient number of polling places and sufficient polling hours to ensure voter access.
- **Fund accessible voting equipment for people with disabilities.** 35 million voters are people with disabilities. Two-thirds of polling places inspected in 2016 had at least one impediment to people with disabilities.
- **Stipulate that provisional ballots posted at incorrect polling places must be counted**, subject to reasonable verification. For example, thousands of

Texans' votes were thrown out in 2016 and 2018 because eligible voters showed up at the incorrect polling place.

4. Modernize Election Infrastructure So Our Elections are Safe and Secure.

45 states are using equipment so outdated that is no longer manufactured, and election systems in all 50 states were scanned or targeted by hackers during the 2016 election.

- **Provide a regular, reliable federal funding stream for upgrading and maintaining election infrastructure**, including mandating the use of standardized, state-of-the-art voting machines and providing training and technical assistance for election officials.
- **Require standardized federal paper or printable ballots**, counted by hand or by specified secure devices.
- **In order to protect the security and integrity of federal elections, require the Department of Homeland Security to assess threats prior to elections**, in a manner consistent with current cybersecurity practice, and fund audits prior to election certification.

As Mayor, Mike Bloomberg proposed sweeping reforms to New York State's voting system, including early voting, easing voter registration, and no-excuse absentee voting, to make voting easier for New Yorkers. He also supported the concept of nonpartisan elections to increase competition in local elections and give voters more choice, as many elections in New York are effectively decided in the primary.



FACT SHEET

MIKE BLOOMBERG'S PLAN TO EXPAND VOTING ACCESS AND ENSURE ALL AMERICANS' VOTES ARE COUNTED

Voting Rights in America are under attack.

During the 2016 national election, 6.1 million American adults - more than half of whom are people of color - were [prevented from voting because of a previous criminal conviction](#), even though they had served out their sentences. More than [21 million Americans lack the government-issued photo identification](#) required to vote in multiple states with onerous voter ID laws. States removed more than [17 million](#) Americans from voter rolls in the two years following the Supreme Court's 2013 Shelby v. Holder ruling that gutted protections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. And today, eight states still have not ratified the 24th Amendment, which bans poll taxes.

Mike Bloomberg believes the right to vote is the fundamental right that protects all of the others. He believes attacks on voting rights are an attack on our Constitution and an insult to the generations of Americans who fought and continue to fight for civil rights. His plan would combat President Trump's efforts to undermine the democratic process by expanding free and fair access to the ballot, preventing states from disenfranchising African-Americans, and ending partisan gerrymandering in federal elections.

The centerpiece of Mike's plan is a series of initiatives designed to tackle the racial disparity in voting rights: for example, today nearly 8 percent of Black adults are prevented from voting due to past convictions, four times the rate of other Americans. African-Americans' voting rights were promised in the Voting Rights Act of 1965 but have been under siege by states and the courts ever since. These attacks must end.

THE PLAN

1. Protect the voting rights of all Americans and prevent discrimination and voter suppression.

- **Revitalize the Voting Rights Act.** Reinstate Federal oversight of elections in certain jurisdictions, consistent with the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019, in order to stop discriminatory voting laws before they are enacted.
- **Ban states from purging eligible voters.** Prohibit the deregistering of voters due to inactivity, incomplete cross-checks, or returned, non-forwardable mail. Voters would be removed from voting rolls *only if* they request removal or there is objective evidence of their ineligibility (e.g., due to death).

- **Restore voting rights to people with felony convictions post-incarceration.** Enforce the restoration of voting rights to individuals convicted of felonies as soon as they are released. Decouple outstanding fees, fines, and other restrictions from the right to vote. Pre-trial detainees must also be allowed to register and vote.
- **Ensure federal uniform standards for voting.** Create a nonpartisan federal commission to set standards for voting in federal elections and thereby eliminate disparities across states.
- **Ensure that onerous voter ID restrictions do not prevent registered voters from exercising their rights.** Require states with voter ID requirements to accept, subject to reasonable verification, a sworn affidavit in place of photo ID.
- **Abolish racial, gender, and ability disparities.** Set federal standards for voting in federal elections that will eliminate disparities currently disproportionately affecting communities of color, Native Americans, transgender people, and people with disabilities.

2. End Gerrymandering and Eliminate Partisan Influence in Federal Elections.

- **Inclusive, representative, and non-partisan redistricting.** Replace the current system, which allows parties to draw federal congressional districts that serve their own political interests, by requiring states to establish independent redistricting commissions to draw federal congressional districts in a way that does not give an advantage to one party or group, but reflects the preferences of voters statewide, through a transparent and inclusive process. This is especially important for communities of color that have long been disenfranchised by unfair, partisan redistricting.

3. Make it easier and more convenient to vote.

- **Automatic voter registration.** Enroll eligible voters when they first interact with state government agencies like the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or the Indian Health Service.
- **Same-day registration.** Require states to allow same-day registration to ensure that eligible voters are not turned away on Election Day or early voting days.
- **Pre-register 16- and 17-year-olds.** As part of an enhanced focus on civics, pre-register high-schoolers across America to vote.
- **Online registration.** Require states to allow online registration, which reduces costs and is more environmentally-friendly to administer.
- **Universal early voting.** Mandate early voting to allow eligible voters to cast their ballots in person at least 15 days before Election Day.
- **Universal voting by mail.** Require states to allow voting by mail, and mail ballots to voters at least 45 days before federal elections.
- **Accessibility.** Require and fund accessible voting equipment for people with disabilities, including printable electronic ballots, and conduct research into access issues to ensure that all

eligible voters are able to cast their ballots, including those needing language assistance and individuals with physical disabilities.

- **Conveniently-located polling places.** Create federal standards for a sufficient number of polling place locations and require polling place locations near public transportation where possible.
- **Uniformity and parity across polling places.** Require sufficient polling hours and allow provisional ballots filed at incorrect polling places to be counted, subject to reasonable verification.

4. Protect and secure the integrity of U.S. elections.

- **Upgrade and standardize voting machines, equipment, and ballots.** Provide a regular, reliable federal funding stream for upgrading and maintaining election infrastructure, including mandating the use of standardized, state-of-the-art voting machines, standardized paper and printable ballots, and providing training and technical assistance for election workers.
- **Guard against cybersecurity threats and ensure election integrity.** Require Department of Homeland Security to assess threats prior to elections in a manner consistent with cutting edge cybersecurity practices and advise states of any threats detected. Provide funding for states to conduct risk-limiting audits prior to election certification.

THE ISSUE

- While participation surged in the 2018 midterm elections, nearly [120 million](#) eligible citizens didn't vote.
- Since 2008, more than [15,000](#) polling places have been closed across the U.S.
- Adopting automatic voter registration in every state would add [50 million](#) eligible voters to the rolls. So far, [16](#) states and DC have implemented AVR.
- Gerrymandering after the 2010 census left Republicans with a net benefit of at least [16-17 congressional seats](#) in the 26 states that account for 85% of congressional districts. [Seven](#) states accounted for almost all of the partisan bias, led by Michigan, North Carolina and Pennsylvania.
- [12](#) states still use paperless electronic machines and [45](#) states use voting machines so outdated that are no longer manufactured.
- The administration of U.S. elections is highly decentralized, with more than [10,000](#) jurisdictions running elections with differing rules and few uniform standards, making it easier for states to suppress voters.

MIKE'S RECORD

- As Mayor, Mike proposed sweeping reforms to make voting easier for New Yorkers, including early voting, easier voter registration, and "no-excuse" absentee voting.

- As Mayor, Mike also supported the concept of nonpartisan elections to increase competition in local elections and give voters more choice, as many elections in New York are effectively decided in the primary.
- Mike has been an outspoken critic of Facebook's policy to allow for patently false material to appear in political ads. He has also [condemned](#) President Trump's embrace of foreign election interference.

TRUMP'S ATTACK ON VOTING RIGHTS

President Trump never misses an opportunity to undermine America's election system.

- He has repeatedly called the 2016 election "rigged" and has made numerous unsupported, conspiratorial claims that millions of people, including many undocumented immigrants, have been voting illegally.
- President Trump's Presidential Commission on Election Integrity was dissolved after several lawsuits, but not before asking to Texas records for all voters with Hispanic surnames, a blatantly racist act.
- The Trump Department of Justice reversed the federal government's position on voter ID in support of laws which have been found by courts to be discriminatory against African-Americans.