

# ISSUE STATEMENT

## EARLY & ABSENTEE VOTING

Many voters may not be able to vote in-person at the polls on Election Day. Some states have adopted early voting to provide these voters with a better opportunity to cast a ballot. In addition, all states allow some form of absentee voting, which allows voters to submit ballots by mail on or before Election Day.

### EARLY VOTING - IN PERSON

Voters can cast their ballots early in thirty-two states and the District of Columbia, and do not need to provide a reason or justification. Early voting polling places may be different from Election Day polling locations. Some states require residents to cast early votes at a single, centralized location, while others set up early voting sites throughout the county or in population centers. The length of the early voting period varies dramatically from state to state.

### ABSENTEE VOTING

States requiring an excuse to cast an absentee ballot: Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia

States not requiring an excuse to cast an absentee ballot: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin, Wyoming

### EARLY VOTING UNDER ATTACK

There are currently legislative proposals to limit early voting in states such as Indiana, North Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin. States that limited their early voting periods before the 2012 Election, including Florida and Ohio, experienced longer lines than normal and increased voter confusion on Election Day.

While absentee ballots are an important alternative for voters who cannot cast their ballot in person, the absentee ballot process does not always run smoothly. Faulty processing of absentee ballot applications, absentee ballots being lost in the mail, and ballot printing errors were just a few of the impediments faced by absentee voters during the 2012 Election season.

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law supports expanding opportunities for early voting and no-excuse absentee voting.