



ELECTION AND POST-ELECTION MESSAGING GUIDANCE

The election looks different this year, with more people voting by mail than ever before. The following messaging guidance was developed to help progressive, nonpartisan organizations prepare for various scenarios on Election Day and beyond. The goal is to stand together during a crucial moment in our history, instill confidence in our electoral process and ensure voters feel empowered to participate in our democracy, now and in the future. We encourage organizations to tailor the draft messaging for their audiences (e.g., by translating it for various languages or adding specifics for a geographic area), without straying too far from the key messages outlined for each scenario. This will ensure we're all singing from the same songbook. We are planning for additional scenarios that are not included below because our response will depend greatly on guidance from groups on the ground.

A c4 version of this guidance from Democracy Defense Coalition can be [found here](#). Additional unbranded graphics can be [found here](#).

We have included guidance on timing for deploying messaging, when possible. However, we'll have to be flexible, as we can't know for sure what will happen when. If you have any questions, please reach out to Tyler Lewis at lewis@civilrights.org.

ELECTION RESULTS		
Anticipated Election Scenario	Messaging	Graphics
Results are too close to call but Trump declares himself the winner. Trump threatens legal action on election night.	Key message: Count every vote. Suggested timing: November 3–13 (ballot counting period) The basis of our democracy is that we pick our leaders – our leaders do not pick their voters. Millions of us, young and old, from cities to suburbs, across race and place of origin voted for the America of our greatest imaginations -- a fairer more equal and just America where everyone can thrive. Some politicians and their allies are trying to call the election results before all votes have been counted in an attempt to silence the voice of the people. For democracy to work for all of us,	Count Every Vote graphics (page 5)

	every eligible voter must have our voice heard and our vote counted. As we expected, it is taking longer to count our votes and verify a winner in this year’s election. Election officials are taking the time to count every vote and get it right. Adequate time is necessary to make sure that the voice of the people is heard and that we shape the democracy we deserve. • For democracy to work for all of us, every voter must have our voice heard and our vote counted. Millions of us have turned out – and will turn out – to vote for a fairer more equal and just America where everyone can thrive. Voters have showed up and showed out in this election – to record early voting numbers – even in the midst of a pandemic that has claimed more than 200,000 lives and despite deliberate barriers from day-long lines to attempts to eliminate drop off locations. This threat is a desperate move by a president who knows he’s losing the election. Election officials will take the time that their job demands to count every vote, verify the results, and get it right. Trump doesn’t get to decide when the election is over. He can say what he wants, but it’s the will of the voters that decides. In our democracy, we pick our leaders – our leaders do not pick their voters.	
Trump uncontested win.	Key message: We’re not done fighting for a democracy that serves all of us. Suggested timing: November 3–6 (week of election) • This moment calls us to reflect on the kind of country we want to build as we move forward; a fair and just society where every one of us can thrive. We know this is hard. We are bruised, but we will not be broken. • Our work isn’t done. Some politicians and their allies spent the last four years blocking ballots, disenfranchising voters and spreading disinformation to sabotage this election. As we have in the past, we will continue to organize and leverage our collective power to defend our democracy. We will hold officials accountable to do right by all our communities, including Black, Brown, Asian, Native communities.	Graphic here
Biden uncontested win.	Key message: The people have spoken. Suggested timing: November 3–6 (week of election)	Graphic here

	- Americans turned out in record numbers and chose a future where we all can thrive, and we're just getting started. - For four years, millions of us, young and old, from cities to suburbs, across race and place of origin stood with and for each other -- marching for justice, pulling through this pandemic by pulling together, and rejecting every attempt to divide us along lines of difference. - Now we will work together to rebuild our democracy and our country. We deserve a government of, by and for the people - and a democracy worthy of and accountable to the people. Now begins the work to reform our democracy and rebuild our country.	
Election too close to call.	Key message: Count Every Vote Suggested timing: November 3–13 (ballot counting period) For democracy to work for all of us, every eligible voter must have our voices heard and our votes counted. As we expected, it is taking longer to count our votes and verify a winner in this year's election. Certified officials are making sure every eligible vote is counted accurately. Despite the pandemic and deliberate barriers from day-long lines to attempts to eliminate drop off locations, voters have done our job and turned out in record numbers. And now our election officials are doing theirs, as they have in every previous election.	Graphic option 1 Graphic option 2

INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES/OUTAGES		
Anticipated Election Scenario	Messaging	Graphics
Long lines at polling places.	Key message: Stay in line and make your voice heard. Suggested timing: November 3 (Election Day) For four years, millions of us, young and old, from cities to suburbs, across race and place of origin stood with and for each other -- marching for justice, pulling through this pandemic by pulling together, and rejecting every attempt to divide us along lines of difference. We will not let long lines at the polls and drop boxes stop us now. If you're still in line when the polling place closes, do not leave. You have the right to cast your vote. If for	All Voting is Local graphic : slide 7

	any reason you are prevented from voting, call 866-OUR-VOTE to report it.	
Foreign or domestic attack on election infrastructure – voter rolls, voting machines, etc. OR Attack on power grid, DDOS or other internet service provider attack.	Key message: We must hold officials accountable to making this right. Suggested timing: November 3 (Election Day) We are all concerned about the integrity of our elections. We must do everything we can to hold officials accountable to ensure that they take steps to address this problem, alert impacted voters and take action to make sure votes are counted and this doesn't impact the outcome of the election. The voice of the people must be heard.	

VIOLENCE & INTIMIDATION		
Anticipated Election Scenario	Messaging	Graphics
Reports of violence and/or militia presence at the polls.	Key message: Stay calm and do not approach them. Call the election protection hotline. Suggested timing: November 3 (Election Day) - Stay calm and do not engage. They are trying to scare eligible voters away from the ballot box. Don't fall for it. Private militias are banned in all 50 states. If you see armed groups at or near your local polling location, do not approach them. Instead, document what you see and call 866-OUR-VOTE to report the incident. Learn more here: https://www.law.georgetown.edu/icap/our-work/addressing-the-rise-of-unlawful-private-paramilitaries/state-fact-sheets/ - In the event of an emergency where your or another's health or safety is at risk, you should call 9-1-1. If there is not an emergency situation, the voter intimidation should be reported to election officials, but not necessarily to police because the presence of law enforcement itself can be intimidating to voters,	All Voting is Local graphics : slides 10, 18/19

	especially in Black, indigenous and other communities of color.	
Calls for violence, poll watching and militarization to intimidate voters and suppress votes.	Key message: Your vote is your voice. Suggested timing: November 3 (Election Day) - Black, indigenous and other people of color have experienced these types of thinly veiled intimidation efforts to disenfranchise our communities for generations. And we will not be silenced. Whether you decide to vote in person or drop off your mail-in ballot, your vote has power. Report any incidents and in-person polling issues for the Election Protection Hotline at 866-OUR-VOTE. - In the event of an emergency where your or another's health or safety is at risk, you should call 9-1-1. If there is not an emergency situation, the potential intimidation should be reported to election officials, but not necessarily to police because the presence of law enforcement itself can be intimidating to voters, especially in Black, indigenous and other communities of color.	All Voting is Local graphics : slides 5, 10, 12, 18/19
Police/military/ICE presence at the polls.	Key message: Voter intimidation is illegal. If you see government officials intimidating voters, call the voter protection tipline. Suggested timing: November 3 (Election Day) - Everyone deserves to feel safe when they cast their ballot. State and local law enforcement officials can only be at the polls to help election officials create a safe voting environment. Under no circumstance can police intimidate voters, prevent people from voting, or target racial and ethnic groups. These actions violate federal law. If you believe law enforcement officials or anyone else is intimidating voters, call 866-OUR-VOTE. - Everyone deserves to feel safe when they cast their ballot. Federal agencies (including ICE) cannot interfere with a state's ability to conduct free and fair general elections. The Constitution also bars government officials from targeting voters of color for enforcement actions. At many polling places, lawyers are on site to address legal concerns related to voting. If you see something or feel like you've been discriminated against, call 866-OUR-VOTE.	All Voting is Local graphics : 18/19

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY		
Anticipated Election Scenario	Messaging	Graphics
COVID spike.	Key message: Take measures to stay healthy and cast your vote. Suggested timing: October 26–November 3 (early voting period and Election Day) • (Before Nov. 3) To promote public health, we encourage folks to vote early and vote by mail. Don't wait until the day-of to drop off your ballot. • (Day of) Today, you're joining millions of Americans in having your voice heard! If you're headed to the polls, be sure to follow CDC guidelines and practice social distancing, wear a mask, and sanitize or wash your hands often. Stay safe, stay healthy and cast your vote. We can count on us to cast our ballots while keeping each other safe. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/election-polling-locations.html	• And Still I Vote graphic • Prevent the spread graphic
Natural disaster/major weather event.	Key message: Stay safe and track local resources for more information. Suggested timing: October 26–November 3 (early voting period and Election Day) • Your safety is paramount. Take precautions. Check for updates from your local officials on how to cast your ballot. If you feel like this event has prevented you from casting your ballot, call 866-OUR-VOTE.	All Voting is Local graphics: 18/19