



Iowa's Election Integrity Reform Lawsuit

OVERVIEW

On March 8, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds signed into law Senate File 413 (2021), aimed at protecting the integrity of Iowa elections by providing fair and consistent statewide rules to govern the conduct of elections to include uniform parameters for absentee ballots and voter registration. Less than 24 hours later, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) of Iowa filed a lawsuit seeking a court order prohibiting Iowa's Attorney General and Secretary of State from enforcing or implementing the law claiming it violates Iowa's Constitution.

KEY POINTS



SF 413 (2021) is a commonsense approach that makes it easy to vote and hard to cheat. It provides **fair and consistent rules for Iowa elections statewide**, a constitutional right and duty of the Iowa legislature.



The lawsuit **alleges constitutional violations without providing any evidence of actual harm** caused by the statute, relying instead on imaginative speculation.



Prior to the 2020 election, LULAC and other groups aligned with the Democratic Party filed several similar lawsuits in Iowa contesting many of the same measures at issue here. **They lost then and they will likely lose now, based on precedent.**



Iowa's Election Integrity Reform Lawsuit

ELECTION REFORMS UNDER ATTACK IN IOWA

- Voters must now **register at least 15 days prior** to the election, rather than 10 days.
- Voters may now **request an absentee ballot up to 70 days prior** to an election, rather than 120 days.
- Voters must **cast their absentee ballot within 20 days** (either by mail or in person), rather than within 29 days.
- Iowa election **administrators must now mail absentee ballots during a five-day period** rather than a 19-day period under the old law.
- Except for those submitting ballots under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (which includes members of the U.S. military and other U.S. citizens residing overseas), **absentee ballots must be received before the polls close on Election Day.**
- County auditors are restricted from setting up satellite voting stations at their whim, instead **requiring a petition signed by at least 100 eligible voters** requesting a voting station for a specific location.
- Satellite absentee **voting stations may now be open up to 20 days prior to the election**, rather than 29 days.
- County auditors **may establish only one drop box** and only at the auditor's office.
- Only **immediate family members, housemates, or caretakers** may return another voter's absentee ballot.
- Polls now **close at 8:00pm**, rather than 9:00pm.
- Voters who do not have at least two consecutive non-working hours to vote when the polls are open **may take time off without fear of penalty**, rather than three consecutive hours under the old law.
- Voters **may be removed from voter rolls if inactive for one year**, rather than the previous requirement of two years inactivity.
- Absentee ballots can now **only be distributed to those who request one.**
- County auditors and other organizations may now **only prefill the type and date of elections on an absentee ballot application**, rather than filling in other fields such as the voter's name and address.
- County auditors who **willfully commit technical infractions of the law are now subject to potential prosecution.**
- Election officials are now **prohibited from willfully interfering with a person lawfully permitted at a polling place** making it a misdemeanor to do so.
- Members of **local law enforcement agencies and state patrol are now authorized to take all reasonable actions** to prevent violations of this statute.

