



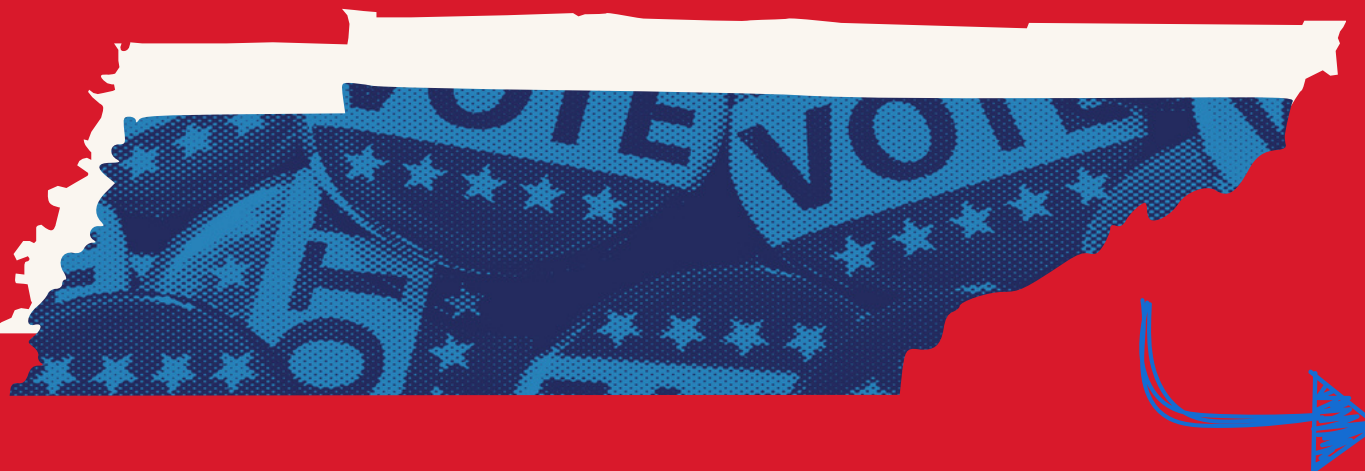
ACLU

Tennessee

2026

VOTER

GUIDE



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This election year, **BE AN INFORMED VOTER.**

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2026.

This national election will determine seats for local, state, and federal positions, including congressional representatives. With recent attacks on voting rights, the upcoming election will be more important than ever!

Our 2026 Voter Guide is full of helpful resources on voter registration, key dates, voting rights, and more.

WHY DID MY DISTRICT CHANGE?

For decades, Tennessee's 9th Congressional District has ensured that Black Memphians have a fair chance to elect candidates of their choice. In the span of a few weeks this spring, the state legislature dismantled that district. Below is our timeline of how we got here, and the legal fight we're waging to reverse it.

April 29, 2026 — U.S. Supreme Court Rules in *Louisiana v. Callais* In a 6–3 decision that weakens protections against Black vote dilution, the Supreme Court struck down Louisiana's congressional map as an unconstitutional racial gerrymander, holding that the state's creation of a second majority-Black district was not required by the Voting Rights Act. Within hours, Tennessee lawmakers point to the ruling as justification to target Memphis's 9th District, a district that has long provided Black voters a fair opportunity to elect their chosen representatives.

May 1, 2026 — Governor Lee Calls a Special Session Under pressure from the Trump Administration, Governor Bill Lee issues a proclamation forcing the General Assembly into a special session to redraw Tennessee's congressional map. The move upends an election cycle already underway, with no input from the voters most affected. ACLU-TN and organizers from across the state immediately understood what was at stake and sprang into action to meet the moment, mobilizing thousands of Tennesseans to call, email, meet with their lawmakers to urge them to vote no on the maps.

May 5–7, 2026 — Legislature Repeals a 50-Year Safeguard and Pushes Through a New Map Over three days, the legislative supermajority repeals a 1972 law that had barred mid-decade redistricting, a guardrail that had been in place for over fifty years. With no support from Black lawmakers, they enact a new map that splits Memphis and Shelby County three ways, stretching each piece deep into white rural counties to dilute Black voting strength.



ACLU-TN TAKES THE FIGHT TO COURT

May 11, 2026 — ACLU Files Federal Lawsuit: *Sherman v. Hargett* The ACLU and ACLU of Tennessee file suit in federal court on behalf of Black Memphis voters and grassroots organizations. The complaint charges that the new map intentionally discriminates against Black voters and retaliates against them for exercising their political voice, both violations of the U.S. Constitution.

June 18, 2026 — Three-Judge Panel Hears Arguments in Nashville A federal three-judge panel convenes to consider whether to block the map ahead of the primary. ACLU attorneys present evidence showing the new district map's boundaries are a direct result of deliberate racial targeting in order to destroy a historically Black district, while Black Memphians fill the courtroom to bear witness and demand their constitutional rights be upheld.

July 23, 2026 — Court Denies Preliminary Injunction The federal court denied our motion for a preliminary injunction in *Sherman v. Hargett*, sanctioning the decision of the Tennessee General Assembly's all-white supermajority to eradicate a longstanding, naturally occurring, and geographically compact majority-Black district. The plaintiffs will continue litigating the case and pursuing permanent relief.

Where We Stand Now

We may not have won a preliminary injunction, but we aren't giving up. The underlying claims remain pending and our lawsuit continues. We remain committed to this fight for the long haul. Maps drawn to dilute the political power of Black voters have no place in our democracy. We'll keep fighting until fair, constitutional representation is restored for communities across Tennessee.



WHICH DISTRICT ARE YOU IN NOW?

Tennessee recently adopted new congressional district lines. Following the rushed redistricting process, approximately 1.4 million registered voters moved into a new district, according to CivicTN. Under the new map, 12 counties are now divided across multiple congressional districts, including Shelby County (Memphis) and Davidson County (Nashville), which are both divided among three districts. In those counties, two neighbors may share a street but not a representative.

Districts adopted May 7, 2026

District 1: Carter, Cocke, Greene, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sevier, Sullivan, Unicoi, Washington, and parts of Jefferson.	District 2: Blount, Claiborne, Grainger, Knox, Loudon, Union, and parts of Campbell and Jefferson.	District 3: Anderson, Bradley, Hamilton, McMinn, Meigs, Monroe, Polk, Roane, and parts of Rhea.
District 4: Bledsoe, Cannon, Coffee, Franklin, Grundy, Marion, Sequatchie, Van Buren, Warren, and parts of Davidson and Rutherford.	District 5: Benton, Dyer, Henry, Hickman, Houston, Humphreys, Lake, Lauderdale, Lewis, Obion, Stewart, Weakley and parts of Maury, Montgomery, Shelby, Tipton, and Williamson.	District 6: Clay, Cumberland, DeKalb, Fentress, Jackson, Morgan, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Scott, Smith, White, Wilson, and parts of Campbell, Davidson, Rhea, and Sumner.
District 7: Cheatham, Dickson, Macon, Robertson, Trousdale, and parts of Davidson, Montgomery, and Sumner.	District 8: Carroll, Chester, Crockett, Decatur, Gibson, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, Perry, and parts of Fayette, Shelby, and Tipton.	District 9: Bedford, Giles, Hardeman, Hardin, Lawrence, Lincoln, Marshall, McNairy, Moore, Wayne, and parts of Fayette, Maury, Rutherford, Shelby, and Williamson.



**CHECK YOUR
REGISTRATION STATUS**

FIND YOUR POLLING PLACE

SCAN HERE



OR VISIT [GOVOTETN.GOV](https://govotetn.gov)

WHAT TO KNOW AT THE POLLS

POLLING PLACE HOURS

- Opening times vary by county. Check [GoVoteTN.gov](https://www.govotetn.gov) or your county election commission.
- All polls close at 8 p.m. Eastern, 7 p.m. Central.
- If you are in line when the polls close, you can vote.



BRING A VALID ID

- U.S. Passport.
- U.S. Military photo ID.
- TN driver license with your photo.
- TN handgun carry permit with your photo.
- Photo ID issued by the federal or TN state government.
- Photo ID issued by the TN Department of Safety and Homeland Security.
- All work even if expired.

THESE WON'T WORK

- College student IDs, including IDs from Tennessee public universities.
- Photo IDs issued by another state.
- Photo IDs issued by a city or county, including library cards.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE AN ACCEPTED ID

- You can still vote a provisional ballot.
- You then have two business days after the election to bring an accepted ID to your county election commission.



WHAT'S ON THE BALLOT



REPRESENTING YOU IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

One United States Senate Seat

Nine United States House of Representatives seats

REPRESENTING YOU IN TENNESSEE

Governor



REPRESENTING YOU IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE

All 99 Tennessee House of Representatives seats

Tennessee Senate, odd-numbered districts

ALSO ON YOUR BALLOT

- Three proposed amendments to the Tennessee Constitution
- County and municipal offices in some jurisdictions
- For a full list, visit sos.tn.gov/elections/calendar

THREE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Tennessee amends its constitution only during a governor's election year. Three measures passed the legislature as constitutionally required. Now they go to you.

To pass, an amendment needs yes votes totaling more than half of all votes cast in the governor's race.

BAIL

Amends Article I, Section 15 to change who can be held in jail before trial. Today, judges can deny bail only for capital offenses. This measure would extend that to a list including dozens of felonies. The ballot will not name those crimes and will instead ask voters to decide this issue without full information.

PROPERTY TAX

Amends Article II, Section 28 to a ban a statewide property tax by writing that ban into the constitution. Tennessee repealed its state property tax in 1949. This would make it hard for one to ever return. It does not change property taxes levied by counties and cities.

RIGHTS OF CRIME VICTIMS

Amends Article I, Section 35. Would expand the constitutional rights of crime victims in Tennessee court proceedings. How victims enforce those rights would be left to the legislature to work out later.



ABSENTEE VOTING

Tennessee requires an excuse to vote by mail. Early voting does not require an excuse. If none of the categories below fits your situation, your options are early voting or Election Day.

WHO CAN VOTE ABSENTEE BY MAIL?

You qualify if you:

- Are 60 or older.
- Will be outside the county where you are registered for the entire voting period.
- Are hospitalized, ill, or physically disabled and unable to get to your polling place. No doctor's note required.
- Are the caretaker of someone who is hospitalized, ill, or disabled. No doctor's note required.
- Are a full-time student at a college or university outside the county where you are registered, or are married to one.
- Live in a nursing home, assisted living facility or home for the aged outside your county of residence.
- Have jury duty or are a military or overseas voter.

This is a partial list. See the full list at:

sos.tn.gov/elections/guides/guide-to-absentee-voting

HOW DO I REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?

Submit a written request to your county election commission by mail or email. Your request must be received no later than Saturday, October 24, 2026. Requests are accepted starting 90 days before the election.

HOW DO I RETURN IT?

By mail only. Your county election commission must receive your completed ballot by the time the polls close on Election Day. You cannot hand deliver it, and you cannot give it to a poll worker.

YOUR RIGHTS AT THE POLLS

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

Vote with privacy and confidentiality.

Ask for and receive help when going to vote, as long as that person is not your employer or union rep.

Be free from intimidation from campaigners. They must be at least 100 feet from the polling place.

Have a fully ADA compliant and accessible polling place. Be sure to check that your polling place is ADA compliant before the absentee ballot application deadline.

Vote even if you're listed as "inactive." If you have NOT moved, sign a written affirmation of your address at your polling place.

Complete a provisional ballot if you forgot your ID or if they cannot find your name on the voter rolls.

Bring a sample ballot into the polling place for use in the voting booth.

Vote if you are in line when the polls close. Stay in line. You have the right to vote.

Lodge a complaint if you think your rights have been violated. Contact sos.tn.gov/elections/services/elections-complaint-forms



CONCERNS WHILE VOTING?

Contact The Election Protection Hotline

ENGLISH: 866-687-8683, 866-OUR-VOTE

SPANISH: 888-VE-Y-VOTA, 888-839-8682

ASIAN LANGUAGES: 888-API-VOTE, 888-274-8683

ARABIC: 844-YALLA-US, 844-925-5287

866ourvote.org



Check how you will vote or schedule it on your calendar..

MAKE A VOTING PLAN

- ☐ I WILL VOTE EARLY.
- ☐ I WILL VOTE ON ELECTION DAY.
- ☐ I WILL VOTE IN THE MORNING.
- ☐ I WILL VOTE ON MY LUNCH BREAK.
- ☐ I WILL VOTE AFTER WORK
- ☐ I WILL GO TO THE POLLS ALONE.
- ☐ I WILL GO TO THE POLLS WITH A FRIEND.
- ☐ I WILL DRIVE TO THE POLLS.
- ☐ I WILL SCHEDULE A RIDE TO THE POLLS.
- ☐ I WILL WALK TO THE POLLS.



2026 KEY DATES

VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE

Monday, Oct. 5

EARLY VOTING

Wednesday, Oct. 14 – Thursday, Oct. 29

ABSENTEE BALLOT REQUEST DEADLINE

Saturday, Oct. 24

ELECTION DAY

Tuesday, November 3

VOTING AS A STUDENT

I AM A COLLEGE STUDENT. WHERE DO I REGISTER?

You choose. You have the right to register at the address you consider home, whether that is your family's house or where you live for school. You may only be registered in one place.

If you are registered in Tennessee but attending school outside your county or out of state, you can vote by absentee ballot. Being a full-time student outside your county of registration is a qualifying excuse.

If you registered to vote by mail or online and this is your first election in your county, you generally have to vote in person the first time.

CAN I USE MY STUDENT ID TO VOTE?

Tennessee does not accept college student IDs as voter identification. This is true even for IDs issued by Tennessee public universities. Bring a Tennessee driver license, a U.S. passport, a Tennessee or federal photo ID, or a U.S. military ID. All work even if expired.

If you do not have one, you can get a photo ID for voting at a Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security driver service center.

VOTING WITH A CRIMINAL RECORD

SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Myth: Once you have a criminal record, you can never vote again in Tennessee.

Not true.

Misdemeanors never affect your voting rights. Felonies are different. After you complete your sentence, you can petition to get your rights back for most felony convictions. A short list of offenses is permanently disqualifying, including but not limited to murder, rape, and voter fraud. For most formerly incarcerated people, the door is not locked. You have to push it open.

Myth: You have to pay off everything you owe first.

As of March 2026, this changed. Restitution to victims is still required. Unpaid court costs are no longer a barrier.

Child support rules changed too. Instead of being fully caught up on back child support, you need to be compliant with your child support orders for the past 12 months. Compliant is not the same as paid off. The law now recognizes consistent, good-faith efforts to catch up.

ACLU-TN and Free Hearts backed this change, with lead sponsors Sen. Raumesh Akbari and Rep. Karen Camper.

Myth: This affects only a few people.

More than 470,000 Tennesseans have lost the right to vote, according to the Campaign Legal Center. That is 8 percent of the voting-age population. More than 21 percent of Black adults of voting age in Tennessee are affected. One in five.

Your story is not over. There is a record of the offense, the conviction, and the sentence. That is not where your record ends. When you file a petition to restore your voting rights, you create a new entry in your own historical record. Your past left a paper trail. Your future can too.

For more info, visit [ACLU-TN.org](https://aclu-tn.org) and click the tab for our voting restoration section.

  Watch and share
our voting rights
restoration videos.

VOTING WITH A PROVISIONAL BALLOT

A POLL WORKER TOLD ME I HAVE TO VOTE PROVISIONALLY. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

A provisional ballot keeps you in the process when there is a concern about your eligibility. It is a backstop, not a rejection.

You may be offered a provisional ballot when:

- You do not have an accepted photo ID.
- An election official asserts you are not registered.
- Your name is not on the voter list at your polling place.
- Your name was marked off because you requested an absentee ballot.

You will sign an affidavit stating that you are eligible. You then mark your ballot the same way as any other voter. Provisional ballots are kept separate from regular ballots until your eligibility is confirmed.

If you voted provisionally because you did not have ID, bring an accepted photo ID to your county election commission within two business days after the election. Your ballot will not count if you do not.

Ask the poll worker what you need to do and when. Write it down before you leave.

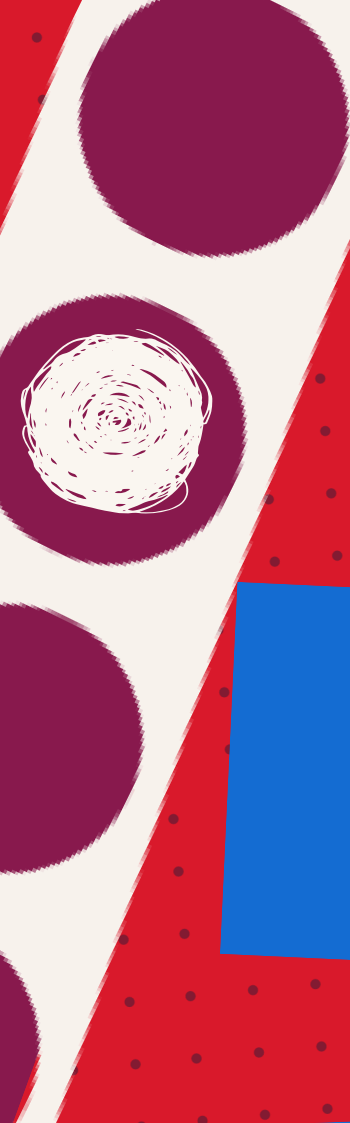


A close-up photograph of a Black man and a white woman. The man, on the left, has short, dark, curly hair and is wearing a white button-down shirt. The woman, on the right, has long, wavy hair with a blue-to-teal gradient and is wearing a white top. They are both looking directly at the camera. The man's hand is resting on the woman's shoulder, and both hands have a circular white sticker with the word 'VOTE' in blue capital letters, surrounded by a ring of small red and blue stars. In the top left corner, there are two overlapping circles, one red and one dark blue. In the top right corner, the text 'ACLU' is written in large, bold, blue capital letters, and 'Tennessee' is written below it in a smaller, red, serif font.

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