THEN & NOW: HOW ELECTIONS HAVE CHANGED SINCE 2012
Then & Now: How Elections Have Changed since 2012

7 Key Elections Topics:
- Online Voter Registration
- Same-Day Voter Registration
- Voter ID
- Felon Voting Rights
- Early and No-Excuse Absentee Voting
- Automatic Voter Registration
- Technology & Costs

The crucial question: Is voting easier or harder than it was 4 years ago?
Online Voter Registration

Amount of change: Significant

- **In 2012**: 13 states provided an online voter registration option for voters, in addition to traditional registration methods, such as at a motor vehicle agency or on paper: Arizona, California, Colorado, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Nevada, New York, Oregon, South Carolina, Utah and Washington.

- **In 2016**: 31 states and the District of Columbia have online voter registration systems up and running.
Same-Day Voter Registration

Amount of change: **Significant**

- **In 2012**: 11 states and the District of Columbia offered same-day voter registration.
- **In 2016**: While the number has remained almost the same (12 states and the District of Columbia), the states have changed and three more have enacted legislation authorizing same-day voter registration.
Voter ID

Amount of change: **Significant**

- **In 2012**: 29 states required some form of documentary evidence of voter identification at the polls; of those, four were considered strict photo ID laws (Georgia, Indiana, Kansas and Tennessee).

- **In 2016**: 33 states require some form of documentary evidence of voter identification at the polls; of these, seven are considered strict photo ID laws (Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, North Dakota, Tennessee and Virginia).
Felon Voting Rights

Amount of change: Minimal

- **In 2012:** Twelve states and the District of Columbia automatically restored the right to vote after completing the term of incarceration. Thirty states automatically restored rights after completion of full sentence, including parole and/or probation. Nine states required a gubernatorial pardon or court action for restoration of rights. Lastly, two states never took away a felon’s right to vote—Maine and Vermont. Three states overlap between gubernatorial and court action and automatic restoration upon completion of sentence depending on the crime.

- **In 2016:** In 13 states and the District of Columbia, felons lose the right to vote only during incarceration and rights are restored after release and now twenty-nine states automatically restore rights after completion of full sentence. Nine states required a gubernatorial pardon or court action for restoration of rights. Otherwise, states remained in the same broad categories.
Early and No-Excuse Absentee Voting

Amount of change: Moderate

- In 2012: 35 states offered one or more of those same options (no-excuse absentee voting, early in-person voting or vote-by-mail) for everyone.
- In 2016: 37 states offer either no-excuse absentee voting, early in-person voting or vote-by-mail for everyone.
Automatic Voter Registration

Amount of Change: **Significant**

- **In 2012**: No states had enacted automatic voter registration
- **In 2016**: 5 states have enacted automatic voter registration: California, Connecticut, Oregon, Vermont and West Virginia. Of those only Oregon has been implemented with the other being implemented in 2017 and 2018. The Illinois Legislature passed a bill that is awaiting signature by the Governor.
Technology & Costs

Amount of Change: **Significant**

- **In 2012:** Voting technology wasn’t a big issue; many states had replaced their equipment in the ten years prior, using federal money from the Help America Vote Act to do so.

- **Since then:** Voting tech has become a big issue in at least some states. State-level action includes: New Mexico and Rhode Island bought new equipment statewide; Maryland is splitting costs with local jurisdictions to lease new equipment; North Dakota just put out an RFP this year; Colorado determined what kind of equipment it would encourage counties to buy; South Carolina and Nebraska each established interim committees on voting technology.
The Crucial Question

Is voting easier or harder than it was in 2012?
THANK YOU!

All presentations and resources from this session can be found on NCSL’s Summit Resources webpage

Daniel.Diorio@ncsl.org 303-856-1474
Wendy.Underhill@ncsl.org 303-856-1379