



CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Who Lacks ID in Georgia Today?: An Exploration of Voter ID Access, Barriers, and Knowledge

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Georgia was one of the first states in the country to adopt a strict photo ID requirement.¹ The current voter ID law requires those voting in-person to show one of the following **photo** IDs: Georgia driver's license (current or expired); non-expired student ID from a Georgia public college or university, a non-expired government employee ID (issued by any Georgia state entity or local jurisdiction or entity within Georgia, or the federal government); a non-expired US passport or passport card; a non-expired US military ID; a non-expired tribal ID; or a non-expired federal or state ID (from Georgia or any US state).² For absentee voting, a Georgia driver's license number, the number from a Georgia state ID card, or a copy or photo of one of the photo IDs that is accepted for in-person voting must be included with the application.

VoteRiders and the Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement (CDCE) at the University of Maryland contracted with SSRS, a highly regarded survey firm, to obtain a representative sample of the Georgia adult US citizen population to examine the extent to which adult citizens in Georgia have the ID needed in order to vote, as well as to gauge their understanding of Georgia's voter ID law.³ To the best of our knowledge, this is the first survey of voting eligible Georgians with questions specific to the exact provisions of the Georgia voter ID law. This research builds on national survey research conducted earlier this year with additional partners including the Brennan Center for Justice and Public Wise.

The sample of 1,258 respondents was drawn from SSRS's probability panel with a supplement from the Verasight probability panel. Included in the sample are oversamples of 18-24-year-olds, Hispanic respondents, and individuals with income of less than \$30,000 per year. The survey was fielded July 18, 2024 through August 11, 2024. All of the results below are weighted. The survey instrument was developed by CDCE with consultation from VoteRiders. The survey was available in English or Spanish, with Spanish translation provided by SSRS in consultation with Selene M. Gomez of VoteRiders. All data analysis was conducted by CDCE. To obtain population estimates we apply the survey results to the U.S. Census Current Population Survey's estimates of the citizen voting-age population in Georgia.⁴ A summary of the main results follows. The topline results are available at this [link](#).

About 76,000 Georgian adult citizens (1%), do not have any of the documents they need to vote in Georgia. 18-29-year-old Georgians are three times more likely than their older counterparts to lack the necessary ID (3% vs. 1%). Additionally, Georgians who are politically independent are more likely to lack the necessary ID (5%) than Republicans (1%) and Democrats (less than 1%).

While 96% of Georgians have a current or expired driver's license that would be accepted as voter ID, 4%, or over 326,000 Georgians, do not. Nearly 308,000 Georgians do not have a

¹ See Table 2 in [Biggers, Daniel R., and Michael J. Hanmer. 2017. "Understanding the adoption of voter identification laws in the American states." *American Politics Research* 45\(4\): 560-588.](#)

² See <https://sos.ga.gov/page/georgia-voter-identification-requirements> last visited 9/26/24.

³ Throughout this report when we refer to Georgians we are referring to voting age US citizens who are residents of the state of Georgia.

⁴ We use the latest estimates from 2022, Table 4a at:

<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/voting-and-registration/p20-586.html>

driver's license at all. Seven percent of Black Georgians and 7% of Hispanic Georgians do not have a driver's license that would be accepted for voting, compared to 2% of White Georgians. Similarly, 7% of Georgians ages 18-29 cannot use a driver's license to vote, compared to 3% of those ages 30 and older. Low-income Georgians (earning less than \$30,000 per year) are disproportionately less likely to have a driver's license that can be used for voting: 12% do not have a driver's license they can use to vote compared to less than 3% of those earning more than \$30,000 per year.

Among Georgians without a current Georgia driver's license or an expired driver's license, or with a different name and/or address on their license, 52% do not have a state ID or their state ID is expired and so cannot be used to vote. Overall, over 195,000 Georgians (3%) do not have a driver's license or state ID card that can be used for voting. For 18-29-year-olds without an acceptable license for voting, 64% do not have a current state ID compared to 46% of those 30 and older.

Fewer than half (46%) of Georgia residents have a current US passport or US passport card. Over half of Democrats have a US passport or passport card (53%), while 43% of Republicans and 36% of independents do so. Over half of Hispanic Georgians (52%) have a current US passport or passport card that can be used for voting. Black Georgians are slightly more likely to have a US passport or passport card than White Georgians (48% and 44% respectively).

The rates at which other unexpired forms of accepted voter ID can be used is relatively low. Roughly 10% of Georgia residents have an unexpired student ID that would be accepted for voting, including 31% of 18-29-year-olds. Thirteen percent of Georgians have an unexpired government employee ID, 13% of Georgians have an unexpired weapons carry permit, 7% have an unexpired military ID, and 1% have an unexpired tribal ID that they can use to vote.

If a voter's current name and address do not appear on the ID they present at the polls, they might run into problems. While an address match between the voter registration address and the address on the voter ID is not a requirement of Georgia's voter ID law, voters who lack updated documents may incorrectly believe they cannot use their ID, or could experience confusion and intimidation at the polls in their interaction with pollworkers, who may not be aware of the intricacies of the state's voter ID law. Of those Georgians who have a driver's license that can be used to vote, 9% have a different name or address on their license. This is especially the case for younger Georgians; 19% of 18-29-year-olds have a license with a different name or address, compared to 6% of those ages 30 and older.

When combining a driver's license and state ID, the survey indicates that 11% of Georgians might have a potential difficulty at the polls due to lack of ID or a name and/or address mismatch. This includes those who have neither a driver's license nor state ID card that can be used for voting (3%), have a license and state ID card but both have a different name and/or address (3%), and have a license but it has a different name and/or address (5%).

Expiration Date

There are several implications of the provision in Georgia’s voter ID law that provides that a Georgia driver’s license is the only accepted form of voter ID that can be expired.

One implication is that over 85,000 Georgian adults can use their expired Georgia driver’s license to vote. While expired licenses from other states are prohibited, voters can use a non-expired license from another state, which nearly 77,000 Georgians have. Based on our results, over 326,000 eligible voters in Georgia are unable to present a driver’s license to vote, either because their out-of-state license has expired (over 18,000) or because they do not have a driver’s license at all (nearly 308,000). Similarly, Georgia does accept Georgia state IDs and state IDs with a photo from other states, but all state IDs must be non-expired. Our estimates suggest that nearly 70,000 have an expired Georgia state ID but are not able to use it to vote, while over 50,000 have a non-expired state ID from another state that they can use to vote.

Georgia’s prohibition of expired military ID leaves 12% of Georgia residents, or over 881,000 people, unable to use their military ID to vote. Only 7%, or over 546,000 Georgians possess a non-expired military ID.

Documentary Proof of Citizenship

About 760,000 voting-age Georgians who are US citizens (10%) would have difficulty showing documentation proving their citizenship (documentary proof of citizenship, or DPOC). Documents proving citizenship include US birth certificates, US passports or passport cards, US naturalization certificates, and US certificates of citizenship. **One percent of all Georgians do not have any DPOC at all, while 9% cannot readily access their DPOC.**⁵

Lack of accessible DPOC affects Black and White Georgians the same (10% do not have it), but 16% of Hispanic Georgians do not have accessible DPOC. Additionally, Democrats and Republicans are equally likely to not have accessible DPOC (8%), but independents are twice as likely to not have accessible DPOC (16%). Georgians aged 18-29 are substantially more likely to lack DPOC than those 30 or older (16% vs 8%).

Knowledge of Voter ID Law provisions

98% of Georgia residents do not know all of the core requirements of the voter ID law in their state. Our survey asked if Georgians knew if they had to: (1) show ID to vote; (2) if the ID must be a photo ID; (3) if Georgia accepts expired IDs; and (4) which type of ID can be expired. **Over 1.7 million Georgians, or 23%, do not know a single major provision of the Georgia voter ID law.** Twenty-two percent know that ID is required for voting in-person, but do not know any of the other major components of the law. The majority know that ID is required for voting in-person and it must be a photo ID (51%). Just 1% know there is an ID requirement for voting in-person, that the ID must have a photo, and that some forms of expired IDs are allowed; only 2% know those three provisions and also know that the only accepted expired ID is a driver’s

⁵ We assessed whether items used for DPOC were “in a place you could quickly find it if you had to show it tomorrow.”

license. **That is, 2% know the four core components of Georgia's ID law that governs in-person voting, while 98% do not.**

Younger Georgia residents are disproportionately less likely to know any major provision of Georgia's voter ID law. 44% of 18-29 year old Georgians do not know any major provision of the law, compared to 18% of Georgians 30 years and older. Independents are more likely to not know a single provision of the Georgia voter ID law (39%) than Democrats (19%) or Republicans (20%).

To apply for an absentee ballot, Georgia requires a driver's license or state ID number and only requires a copy of an acceptable form of ID if one of those cannot be provided. However, only 9% of Georgians knew this component of the state's ID law for absentee voting. Over 91% of Georgians either think the law is more strict (26%) or are not sure if a copy of their ID must be provided (just under 66%). Knowledge of this provision of the ID law varied across key demographic categories. While 8% of Black Georgians and 9% of White Georgians know this law, only 4% of Hispanic Georgians do. Republicans were more likely to know this law (11%) than Democrats (8%) and independents (5%), but across party lines the vast majority do not know this requirement. Seven percent of people with annual incomes under \$30,000 knew this law, compared to 12% of those with an annual income over \$100,000.

Voter Confidence

Ninety-five percent of Georgians are confident they have the ID they need to vote, including 97% of Black Georgians, 95% of White Georgians, and 94% of Hispanic Georgians. Ninety-eight percent of Democrats and 96% of Republicans are confident in this, compared to 86% of independents. While 3% of independents incorrectly answered "I do not need ID to vote in GA," only 1% of both Democrats and Republicans believe this. Those least confident about the need to bring their ID to the polls are 18-29 year olds (89% vs. 96% for those 30 and up) and people with annual incomes less than \$30,000 (88% vs. at least 93% for those with higher incomes).

Georgians are a little less confident they can provide information from their IDs in order to vote by mail (92%). While 78% of Georgians who are 18-29 are confident they can provide the ID information required to vote by mail, 95% of Georgians who are 30 and older are confident.

Barriers to Obtaining a Driver's License

There are a variety of reasons why some Georgians do not have a driver's license. Two in ten Georgia residents without a driver's license cite financial difficulties as the reason why. The specific financial difficulties are the "cost of getting a license" (14%) and the "cost of buying a car" (6%). One in ten Georgians without a car say "I can't drive for medical reasons or disability." Another 14% say "driving makes me anxious/afraid." Some Georgians without a license face problems with the process, saying "I don't have transportation to the ID issuing office" (6%),

“the process is too complicated” (4%), and “I don’t have the documents needed” (2%). Two in ten Georgians are “not interested,” and 8% say they “don’t like driving/don’t drive.”