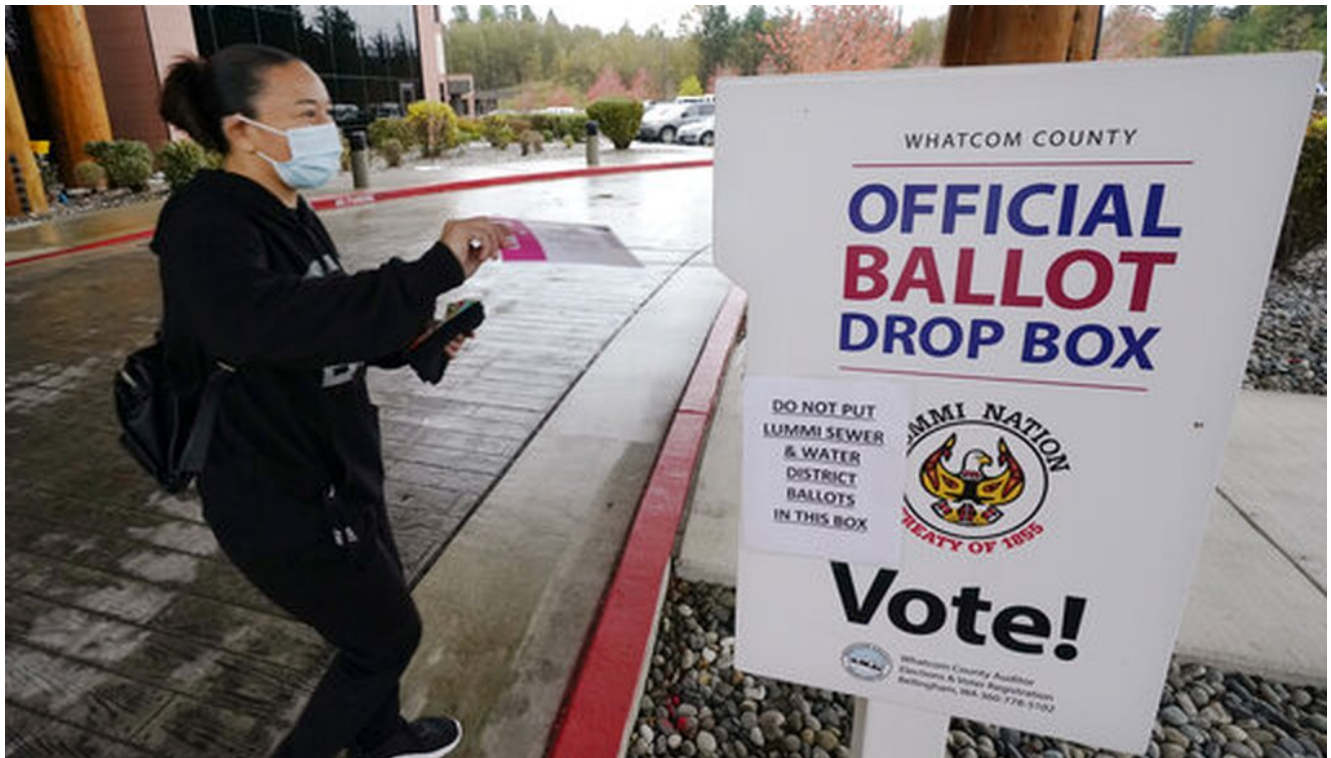


Claims about HR 1 keep pouring in. Here are all of our fact-checks in one place



Lummi Tribal member Patsy Wilson casts her ballot into a ballot drop box on Nov. 3, 2020, near Bellingham, Wash. (AP)

Confused by what people are saying about H.R. 1, the hotly contested voting and elections bill?

We can't blame you. The 791-page Democratic-backed bill — which passed the U.S. House of Representatives on a mostly party-line vote and awaits action in the Senate — is complex and wide-ranging. It combines proposals for voter registration, absentee voting, in-person voting, campaign finance, and ethics related to federal elections.

It has also been hit by a torrent of false and exaggerated claims from politicians and social media users, such as that H.R. 1 lets non-citizens and minors vote and provides lawmakers a second salary. Some go as far as to claim that it would

“permanently destroy voting in America.” (It wouldn’t.)

Over the past few weeks we’ve checked about 20 statements related to H.R. 1. A few of them are accurate, but most of them exaggerate or otherwise misrepresent aspects of the bill. Here’s a rundown of what we found.

Identification requirements

If H.R. 1 is passed, “absentee ballots would be mailed out to anyone without proof of the voter’s identity.” — Facebook posts

This is False.

A few states already do send ballots to all registered voters, but their process would not be changed by the bill. In every other state, registered voters would typically have to request a mail ballot to receive one. The bill would require all states to make it easier for voters to do that.

The bill would require states to send mail ballot applications to all registered voters before federal elections, but sending an application is not the same thing as sending an actual ballot, and these would go to registered voters only, whose identity and eligibility to vote are known.

H.R. 1 has provisions “banning voter ID” requirements. — Facebook posts

This is partially accurate.

The legislation doesn’t expressly ban voter ID requirements, but it does call for a workaround for voters that already exists in some states.

The bill says that if a state requires voters to show an ID to cast a ballot, it must also allow them to instead present election officials a sworn written statement attesting to their identity and their eligibility to vote.

“This alternative can be important for those few eligible voters that might have difficulty meeting restrictive identification requirements,” David Becker, executive director of the Center for Election Innovation & Research, told PolitiFact.

Eligibility to vote

H.R. 1 “allows minors to vote.” — Rep. Ted Budd, R-N.C.

This is False.

The bill would allow people who are 16 to preregister to vote when they turn 18. That's not the same thing as allowing them to cast a vote.

Under H.R. 1, a person can still vote if they are 16, in the U.S. illegally, have no ID and have not registered to vote. — Facebook posts

This is Mostly False.

It is wrong on the first two points. It would allow 16-year-olds to pre-register to vote, but not to cast ballots. And only eligible citizens can vote, as is the case today.

The statement leaves out important context on the other two points: The bill would allow a voter without ID to present a sworn statement instead, and it would allow same-day registration. Many states already have these provisions.

Meanwhile, the claim ignores the security provisions and eligibility checks in the bill.

H.R. 1 would mean “that millions of illegal immigrants are quickly registered to vote.” — Former Vice President Mike Pence

This rates False.

The bill does not permit voting by noncitizens in U.S. elections, whether they're in the country legally or not. Pence was referring to a provision that would require automatic voter registration for people using services at government agencies. But that section says government agencies would pass along a person's information for voter registration only if they are citizens. People would still be attesting that they are eligible to vote, with penalties for lying, and it would still be up to election officials to verify eligibility.

Says H.R. 1 gives immigrants illegally in the country the right to vote. — Instagram posts

We covered this. This is False.

H.R. 1 keeps in place federal and state criminal laws that prohibit noncitizens from voting or registering to vote.

H.R. 1 “would force states to restore the voting rights of convicted felons — including violent felons convicted of murder or rape.” — U.S. Rep. Doug LaMalfa, R-Calif.

This is Half True.

The proposed legislation would restore voting rights for all people convicted of a crime once they’ve been released from incarceration. The vast majority of states, including California, already restore voting rights for people convicted of a felony, either automatically upon their release or after a period of time.

H.R. 1 “would allow the Boston bomber to have a right to vote.” — Charlie Kirk

This is False.

The proposed legislation would restore federal voting rights for felons only once they’ve completed their sentence and been released from incarceration. Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, the convicted bomber, is serving a life sentence in prison.

In Massachusetts, voting rights for felons are already restored when they’re released; H.R. 1 would not affect Tsarnaev’s eligibility.

Voter registration procedures

H.R. 1 “automatically registers every welfare recipient to vote.” — Former President Donald Trump

This is Mostly False.

H.R. 1 includes an automatic voter registration provision under which government agencies, including those that provide public assistance, would pass along to election officials information about people who are eligible to vote.

But Trump’s statement creates a misleading impression that people on welfare will have a special path to voter registration, regardless of eligibility. The legislation says that government offices that help people with other services, such as veterans or gun owners, would also get the same assistance in registering to vote. Under the bill, applicants could opt out, and election officials will still review applications for eligibility requirements before moving them to the voter rolls.

H.R. 1 “prohibits attempts to clean voter rolls” — Facebook posts

This is incorrect.

Nationwide, election officials regularly remove voters from the rolls who are ineligible, in part with help from a national consortium that shares information with states about voters who moved, died or have duplicate registrations. But some ineligible voters have remained on the rolls, and in other cases election officials have wrongly purged otherwise valid voters.

The bill attempts to standardize the process of maintaining accurate lists. The legislation calls for “standards governing the comparison of data for voter registration list maintenance purposes” and that standards must be public and applied in a uniform and nondiscriminatory manner.

The legislation also states that no person, other than a state or local election official, shall submit a formal challenge to an individual’s eligibility to vote unless that challenge is supported by personal knowledge.

H.R. 1 would “prevent removal of ineligible voters from registration rolls.” — Rep. Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y.

We rated this False.

No section of the bill prevents an election official from removing an ineligible person on the voting rolls. One section of H.R. 1 details rules that states must follow for removing ineligible voters, including a requirement that they notify the registrants.

H.R. 1 requires “internet-only registration with electronic signature.” — Facebook posts

This is incorrect.

The bill does not mandate internet-only registration, but it does promote the option. The bill would require each state to offer an online application for voter registration. The majority of states already offer online voter registration, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

For signatures, the legislation states that an individual who has a signature on file

with a state agency, such as the motor vehicle office, could consent to transfer that electronic signature. Otherwise, the person would submit an electronic copy of their handwritten signature.

H.R. 1 bans “voter registration requirement of full” Social Security Number. — Facebook posts

This needs context.

The bill calls for amending the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to require only the last four digits of an individual’s Social Security Number to register to vote. Most states’ voter registration forms do this already.

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 requires new registrants to provide either their drivers license number or the last four digits of their Social Security Number, to confirm their identity. If a registrant offers neither, they are required to offer another form of identification when voting for the first time, said Becker of the Center for Election Innovation & Research.

H.R. 1 allows “nationwide same-day registration.” — Facebook posts

This is accurate.

Some states already offer same-day voter registration, which allows eligible individuals to cast a ballot on the same day they register. The bill would require all states to allow it. A registered voter could also modify their registration and vote on the same day.

Election and redistricting procedures

H.R. 1 “gives the federal government the power to establish their own committees” to take over the redistricting process. — Turning Point the USA

This is Mostly False.

H.R. 1 would overhaul how congressional redistricting works in the states that do not already have independent redistricting commissions. States currently without one would have to appoint a 15-member panel composed of equal numbers of Democrats, Republicans, and independents. The law also says, broadly, that lines should not be drawn for partisan gain and that communities, if possible, should

not be divided.

However, the bill says states, not the federal government, would choose the commissioners and equip them for the task.

H.R. 1 “legalized limitless ballot harvesting” —Facebook post

This is misleading.

“Ballot harvesting” generally refers to someone collecting absentee ballots on behalf of others and then submitting them. Many states already allow individuals to collect ballots on behalf of others, although some impose certain restrictions.

The bill says that states “shall permit a voter to designate any person” to return their sealed absentee ballot, as long as the person doesn’t get paid based on the number of ballots returned. It would prevent states from putting a limit on how many ballots any person could return on behalf of others.

H.R. 1 “would force states to adopt universal mail-in ballots.” —Pence

This is False.

Several states currently conduct elections almost entirely by mail, sending ballots automatically to every registered voter. But H.R. 1 would not force every state to conduct elections this way.

Rather, the bill would ease the process of voting by mail for those who want to use it, by lifting rules that require an excuse to vote absentee. It would not require anyone to stop voting in person, either early or on Election Day.

Campaigning and fundraising

H.R. 1 will allow members of Congress to draw a second salary “worth an estimated \$600,000 per year!”— Act for America

This is False.

Nothing in the legislation would allow members of Congress to earn a second salary. There is a provision that allows non-incumbent candidates to use campaign funds to pay for expenses such as child care so that they are able to run for office.

H.R. 1 does not change an existing policy that allows candidates to draw a salary of up to \$174,000 from campaign funds. That policy doesn't apply to those who are already in Congress.

The American Civil Liberties Union opposes H.R. 1 on grounds that “it threatens our freedom of speech.” — Ronna McDaniel

This is Half True.

The ACLU opposed the 2019 version of H.R. 1, saying multiple campaign finance provisions would limit free speech. When Democrats unveiled the bill again in January, ACLU said it still held many of its earlier concerns and called some sections “onerous and dangerous.” But the ACLU has stopped short of opposing the bill in 2021.

Miscellaneous

“There are 43 states that have now passed voter suppression laws.” — Rep. James Clyburn, D-S.C.

This is False.

Clyburn's office acknowledged that he misspoke in making this justification for H.R. 1. In reality, bills to restrict voting procedures have been proposed in 43 states, according to one public tally at the time. That's not the same thing as such laws being passed in 43 states.

Source:

<https://www.politifact.com/article/2021/apr/05/claims-about-hr-1-keep-pouring-her-e-are-all-our-fa/>

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