

Re-Estimating the Disability Turnout Gap with a Historic, Voter-Validated Survey

Background: We know that voters with disabilities turn out to vote at lower rates than nondisabled voters. But we do not know the full scale of this turnout gap, nor the how or why of it, nor do we know which state voting regimes most exacerbate this gap. We do know that the only surveys to date have been incomplete. Past surveys **use a narrow definition of disability** and **do not verify whether people who claimed to vote did in fact vote by cross-checking voter files**. Before this ACLU survey, there has never been a large-scale survey measuring the disability turnout gap that verifies voter turnout, let alone one that looks at the intersection of race and disability, and the relationship between the type of disability and the barriers to voting.

Methods:

- Fieldwork was completed by YouGov between February 7-April 25, 2025
- Sample included **29,431** total respondents
- Oversampled people in states with all-mail voting (**6664** total respondents), and Black and Hispanic U.S. adults (**9443** total respondents)
- All surveys were completed online
- The non-probability sample was weighted according to gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, and US Census region based on voter registration lists, the US Census American Community Survey, and the US Census Current Population Survey, and 2020 Presidential vote

Impact: The survey's impact will be significant in several respects:

Adding knowledge: Robust, high-quality data can be used to support advocacy and litigation, and also to target new and better accommodation strategies for people with many diverse types of disabilities.

Normalizing disability: Very few studies and datasets ask about disability, and when they do, the limited questions often cannot accurately capture the scope and reality of the disabled community. If we do this right, asking nuanced questions about disability will become a norm and a necessity among survey researchers.

Strengthening litigation: The (inadvertent) impact of voter suppression efforts on disabled voters opens the door to using the powerful tools of disability rights laws to challenge voter suppression. In our litigation efforts, we have made these arguments, but without the robust data we really need. Expanding access to voters with disabilities will have a ripple effect that will likely expand access for *all* voters, especially those who are marginalized.

Strengthening advocacy: When we have a clear understanding of the impact of voter suppression on disabled voters, we can advocate for policies that expand disabled voter

access and demonstrate the harms of voter suppression measures. We can show politicians in *both parties* that hurting disabled voters hurts their constituents.