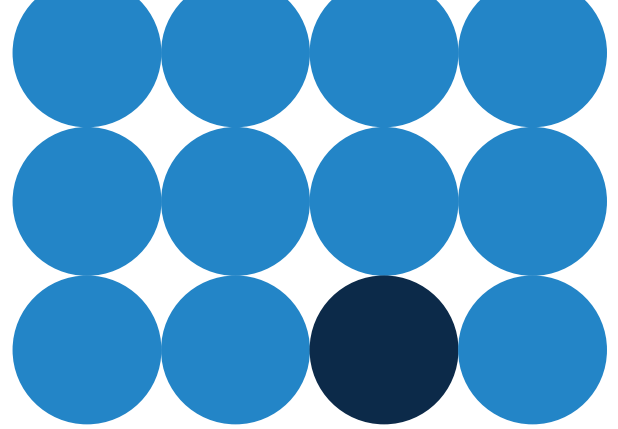


Social Justice Brief

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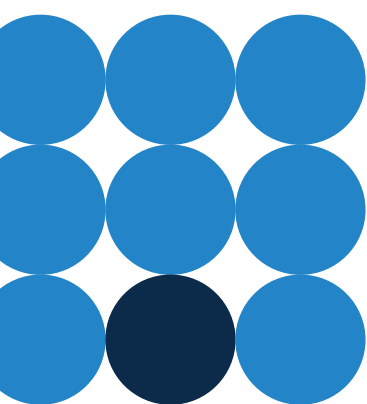
Midterm Election Interference a Real Threat: Aggressive Counter-Interference Mobilization Steps Being Taken

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.



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The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the United States. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards, and to advance sound social policies.



Midterm Election Interference a Real Threat: Aggressive Counter-Interference Mobilization Steps Being Taken

In a recent series of [social justice briefs](#), NASW argued that there was a brewing atmosphere within the Trump administration and far-right political factions that began to embrace election interference as a viable—and necessary—tool for retaining political power after the 2026 midterm elections. Now that the midterms are approximately 100 days away, it is important to revisit that viewpoint and highlight steps being taken to counter those efforts.

Before proceeding with that discussion, it is important to emphasize that when we use the term “election interference” in this brief, we do not apply the term as a benign concept. Indeed, the “election interference” as practiced by the Trump administration has insidious intent. By definition, “election interference” refer to overt actions intended to maliciously alter outcomes of elections—particularly outcomes of national elections. Trump’s overall rhetoric, dismantling of guardrails, and overt public calls to “take over” elections indicate a clear willingness to intervene in ways that exceed traditional executive authority, as outlined below.

Background

There is reporting suggesting that there is a more than significant risk of attempted interference or manipulation of the 2026 midterm elections. That likelihood is reinforced by the fact that concrete steps have already been taken to upset legitimate electoral process during the midterms. For example:

- » The Trump administration has intensified efforts to cast doubt on U.S. elections. By repeating claims of election fraud “more than 100 times” in early 2026, the president has been laying the groundwork for federal intervention in state-run elections.
- » The administration has used such claims to coerce Congress into passing the SAVE America Act—which is essentially a voter suppression tactic.
- » Trump has repeatedly called for federalization of election administration in targeted jurisdictions.

In addition, ProPublica’s (the independent, nonprofit investigative news agency) 2026 investigation revealed:

- » At least 75 career officials responsible for election integrity have departed.
- » Two dozen new Trump appointees—including individuals who supported efforts to overturn the 2020 election—now hold influential election-related positions.

Existing Trump Administration Election Interference Efforts

Experts warn that the current execution of the strategic plan gives the administration an early advantage in shaping the narrative around delegitimizing the nation's overall election process. Narrative manipulation is in fact one of its major tools. By assigning federal agencies as "election protection" agents and offering persistent claims of fraud, the administration can facilitate delegitimizing election results—thereby providing "justification" for federal intervention in Democratic-leaning jurisdictions.

To be clear, such political destabilization poses the greatest risks to free and fair elections. Voting rights and pro-democracy advocates caution that undermining public trust and using federal authority to challenge or override election results could significantly undermine democracy.

While the administration's fully weaponized election interference campaign can appear to some to be daunting, it should not be taken for granted that there is an absence of strong opposition. The sections below outline some of the steps already being taken to combat the election interference campaign.

1. State Governments Counter-Interference Strategies

State governments were jolted into emergency mobilization when it became clear that Trump's election interference plan was no longer theoretical—especially given the fact that it had already been put into action. Recognizing that waiting would allow the administration to lock in its advantage, impacted governors and top state election

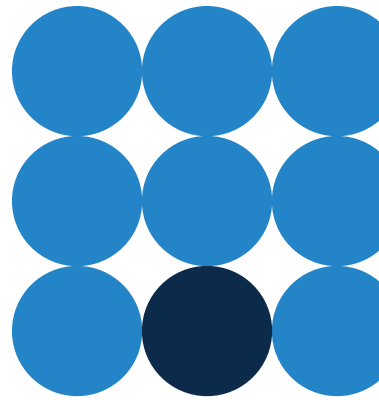
officials agreed to collaborate on an emergency plan to counter the administration's actions.

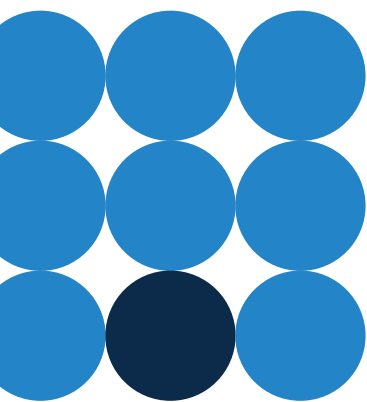
To be accurate, Democratic leaders had begun working on a counter strategy for a while. As reported by Politico, 19 Democratic attorneys general have been meeting for months, conducting legal "war-games," and preparing rapid-response litigation to block federal interference. Blue States' defensive strategy and plan for action includes:

A. Passing state laws designed to block federal intrusion

Several Democratic-led states have passed laws specifically intended to prevent federal agents or Trump-aligned operatives from interfering with election administration. California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland, and Washington have enacted new statutes restricting federal access to election materials or limiting law-enforcement presence at voting sites. Connecticut's new law bars law enforcement from being within 250 feet of polling places, ballot drop boxes, or vote-counting sites unless election officials authorize it. Maryland passed legislation to maintain its mail-ballot counting deadlines and prevent federal attempts to override state procedures.

These laws were explicitly described by sponsors as responses to Trump's rhetoric about sending ICE or National Guard troops to polling places and his administration's attempts to seize election records from Georgia and Arizona counties.





B. Coordinating legal planning by Democratic Attorneys General, such as:

- » Tabletop “war-game” exercises simulating federal interference scenarios—including ballot confiscation, machine seizure, or federal attempts to “nationalize” election administration.
- » Pre-drafted motions for temporary restraining orders (TROs) to: (a) block federal seizure of ballots or machines; (b) prevent deployment of military or ICE personnel to polling places and (c) preserve election materials under state control.
- » Monitoring of Trump administration statements for clues about planned interventions, including Trump’s public suggestion that Republicans should “nationalize voting” and intervene in blue-city election operations.
- » Maintaining litigation readiness: The same coalition of 19 AGs previously sued the Trump administration over a sweeping executive order targeting voting rules. Much of that order was blocked by a federal court.

C. Taking preventive countermeasures, such as:

- » California deployed state election observers in response to DOJ monitors sent by the Trump administration to California polling places.
- » Multiple states have enacted laws or administrative rules to: (a) restrict federal access to voter rolls; (b) block federal attempts to obtain sensitive election data; and (c) prevent federal agents from entering ballot-counting facilities without state authorization
- » Postal-service contingency planning: States are preparing for possible federal

disruptions to USPS operations (e.g., removal of sorting machines, reduced capacity), including expanded ballot drop-box networks and extended early-voting periods.

This pre-planning and collaborative mobilization by Blue States is a departure from the more analytic process-oriented responses to threats to democracy as seen in the past, all of which is indicative of the seriousness that Democratic elected leaders take the election interference threats of the Trump administration and the far-right. Moreover, the counter-offensive by Blue State officials is being matched by a similar counter-offensive on the part of Congressional Democrats and the voting rights, civil rights, and pro-democracy activists organizations.

2. Congressional Democrats Counter-Interference Strategies

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer has a strategy that centers on anticipating the Trump administration’s interference tactics before they occur, stress-testing Congressional responses, and building a rapid-response legal and oversight infrastructure to counter federal overreach, voter suppression, and attempts to seize election materials. Schumer has mobilized Congressional Democrats through a three-part coordinated strategy:

- » creating and running the Election Protection Task Force
- » conducting repeated “war-game” simulations with top election-law experts,
- » issuing formal directives to federal agencies to preserve records, block cover-ups, and prepare rapid-response legal action against Trump-aligned election interference

3. Non-Governmental (NGO) Democracy Protection Community Counter Strategy

Major non-governmental national democracy organizations are simultaneously mobilizing large-scale counter-interference operations against Trump-aligned election-interference efforts. It should be pointed out that these detailed strategies come from many well-organized national groups. Their strategy is not a single plan, but a coordinated set of defensive actions designed to counter the “Deceive, Disrupt, Deny” interference model as described in Project Democracy’s 2026 Executive Override report.

Pro-democracy, voting rights, and civil rights partner organizations outline a multi-layered strategy to counter federal interference, intimidation, and disinformation in the 2026 midterms. Their approach focuses on community resilience, legal defense, communication discipline, and rapid-response mobilization.

A. Countering Disinformation and Manufactured Fraud Narratives through:

- » Rapid debunking and factual communication to prevent viral spread of manufactured fraud claims.
- » Training community leaders to communicate responsibly about interference threats without amplifying panic.
- » Providing voters with clear, state-specific election information to counter confusion intentionally created by federal investigations or executive orders.

B. Preparing communities for potential federal actions such as ICE presence, federal agents near polling places, or attempts to invoke the Insurrection Act, through

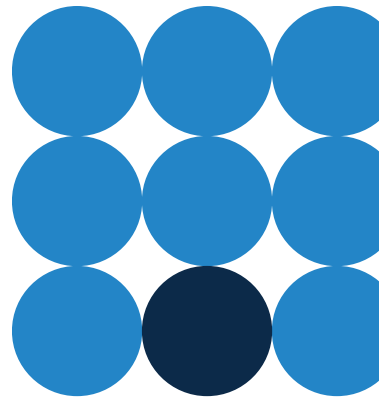
- » Community Resilience Training: Guides for local organizers on how to maintain calm, lawful participation even if federal agents appear near polling sites.
- » Legal readiness: Coordination with state and local officials to document unlawful interference and prepare litigation.
- » Support for election workers: Protect Democracy emphasizes shielding election officials from targeted investigations or harassment intended to chill their work.

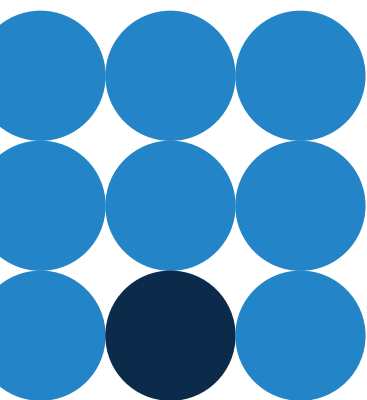
C. Countering attempts to contest or nullify results by preparing for post-election interference including:

- » Documenting chain-of-custody issues and ensuring independent verification of ballots and procedures.
- » Supporting state officials who certify results according to law, even under federal pressure.
- » Public education campaigns explaining how certification works and why premature claims of fraud are unfounded.

Conclusion: Countering Election Interference Actions is Essential to Vulnerable Communities

These collective and aggressive responses—on the part of pro-democracy factions—are heartening for Americans who would be severely affected by a potential collapse of free and fair elections in the nation. This is particularly true for the many millions of vulnerable and politically marginalized people served by social workers and other social safety-net provider organizations.





We must always be reminded that when—as is the case with the Trump administration’s election interference campaign—democratic rights and protections are compromised, invariably marginalized groups disproportionately harmed. As a result, their political voices are greatly muted, denying them protections against discriminatory practices and destabilizing access to social and human services—as demonstrated by recent draconian cuts to Medicaid and SNAP.

Furthermore, an anti-democratic voting system compounds already challenging day-to-day realities, making it harder for them to advocate for their rights, secure needed services, and participate fully in life.

NASW has expressed its commitment to protecting the clients social workers serve through its partnerships with the [Institute for Responsive Government’s Health and Democracy Partnership](#) and the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights’ [Voting Rights Task Force](#) and will continue to support all efforts to promote free and fair elections.

Additional Community Resources

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
[Voting Rights](#)

Brennan Center for Justice
[Threat of Foreign Influence on U.S. Elections Remain as Federal Defenses Recede](#)

Civil Rights Leaders March on Washington
[Civil rights leaders announce ‘March on Washington’ to defend voting rights](#)

Democracy Docket
[Judge says Trump’s attack on mail voting is ‘unconstitutional,’ legal challenge can continue](#)

Election Protection Coalition
[Everything You Need to Know About Voting In Your State](#)

Health and Democracy Partnership
[From Ballots to Better Health: How Inclusive Democracy Shapes The Public’s Health](#)

Lawyers Committee
[Election Protection](#)

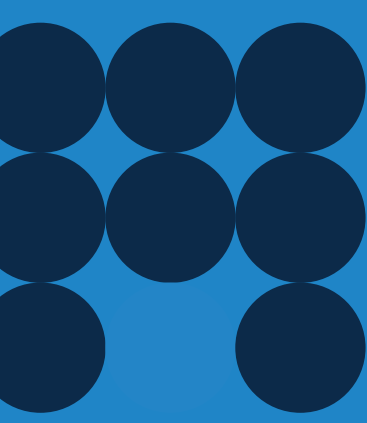
Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Right (LCCHR)
[Voting Rights](#)

Legal Defense Fund (LDF)
[Voting Rights 2026](#)

National Association of Social Workers
[Voting Rights Crisis](#)
[Louisiana v. Callais](#)

Protect Democracy
[Community Resilience in the 2026 Election](#)

Protect Democracy
[Preparing for federal interference in the 2026 midterm elections](#)



NASW Resources

NASW » [SocialWorkers.org](https://www.socialworkers.org)

NASW Foundation » [NASWFoundation.org](https://www.naswfoundation.org)

NASW Press » [NASWPress.org](https://www.naswpress.org)

NASW Assurance Services, Inc. » [NASWAssurance.org](https://www.naswassurance.org)

Find A Social Worker » [HelpStartsHere.org](https://www.helpstartshere.org)

Social Work Blog » [SocialWorkBlog.org](https://www.socialworkblog.org)

NASW Research and Data » [SocialWorkers.org/News](https://www.socialworkers.org/news)

Social Work Advocacy » [SocialWorkers.org/Advocacy](https://www.socialworkers.org/advocacy)



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