



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

The Forum for America's Ideas

Same-Day Voter Registration

Eleven states and the District of Columbia have same-day registration (SDR), whereby any qualified resident of the state can go to the polls on Election Day and register and vote at the same time. North Dakota does not require voter registration. In most other states, voters must register by a deadline prior to Election Day. The deadline varies by state, with 30 days before the election being a common date.

Same-Day Registration States

	Year Enacted
California* Cal. Election Code § 2107	2012
Colorado C.R.S. 1-2-217.7	2013
Connecticut Conn. Gen. Stat. §9-19	2012
District of Columbia D.C. Code § 1-1001.07	2010
Idaho Idaho Code §34-404	1994
Iowa Iowa Code §48A.7A	2007
Maine 21-A M.R.S. §122	1973
Minnesota Minn. Stat. §201.061	1974
Montana Mont. Code. Ann. §13-2-301	2005
New Hampshire N.H. Rev. Stat. Ann. §654:7	1996
Wisconsin Wis. Stat. §6.29(2)	1971
Wyoming Wyo. Stat. §22-3-102	1994

* *California* passed same-day registration in 2012. It takes effect on January 1 of the year following the year in which the Secretary of State certifies that the state has a statewide voter registration database that complies with the requirements of the federal Help America Vote Act of 2002. (no sooner than January 2013)

Advantages of Same Day Registration

- Same day registration leads to increased voter turnout. In the six SDR states that had SDR prior to 2006 and North Dakota (which has no voter registration), turnout is 10 percent to 17 percent higher than the national average. Minnesota estimates that election day registrations account for five percent to ten percent of voter turnout.
- Allowing people to register the same day they intend to vote is more convenient. It particularly benefits people who have difficulty getting to an office to register because of work or transportation conflicts and those who have recently moved.

- Those states that had same day registration prior to the passage of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993 have more control over their voter registration rolls because they are not subject to purging restrictions.

Disadvantages of Same Day Registration

- SDR can be costly and administratively burdensome because it requires additional poll workers.
- SDR must be adopted along with safeguards to prevent fraud.

Preventing Fraud

State election officials from the same-day registration states and North Dakota say that their registration procedures have not resulted in increased fraud. Safeguards against fraud in the SDR states include:

- Requiring photo identification
- Requiring additional identification to verify address
- Segregate SDR ballots, and not counting them until the registrations are confirmed to be valid
- Restricting the sites at which one can register on Election Day, possibly to the county courthouse
- Using electronic pollbooks to verify that a voter has not voted elsewhere in the state
- Ensuring that SDR voters realize that it is unlawful to fraudulently register, and enforcing the law

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures
November 2013

For questions or updates, contact NCSL's elections team at 303-364-7700.