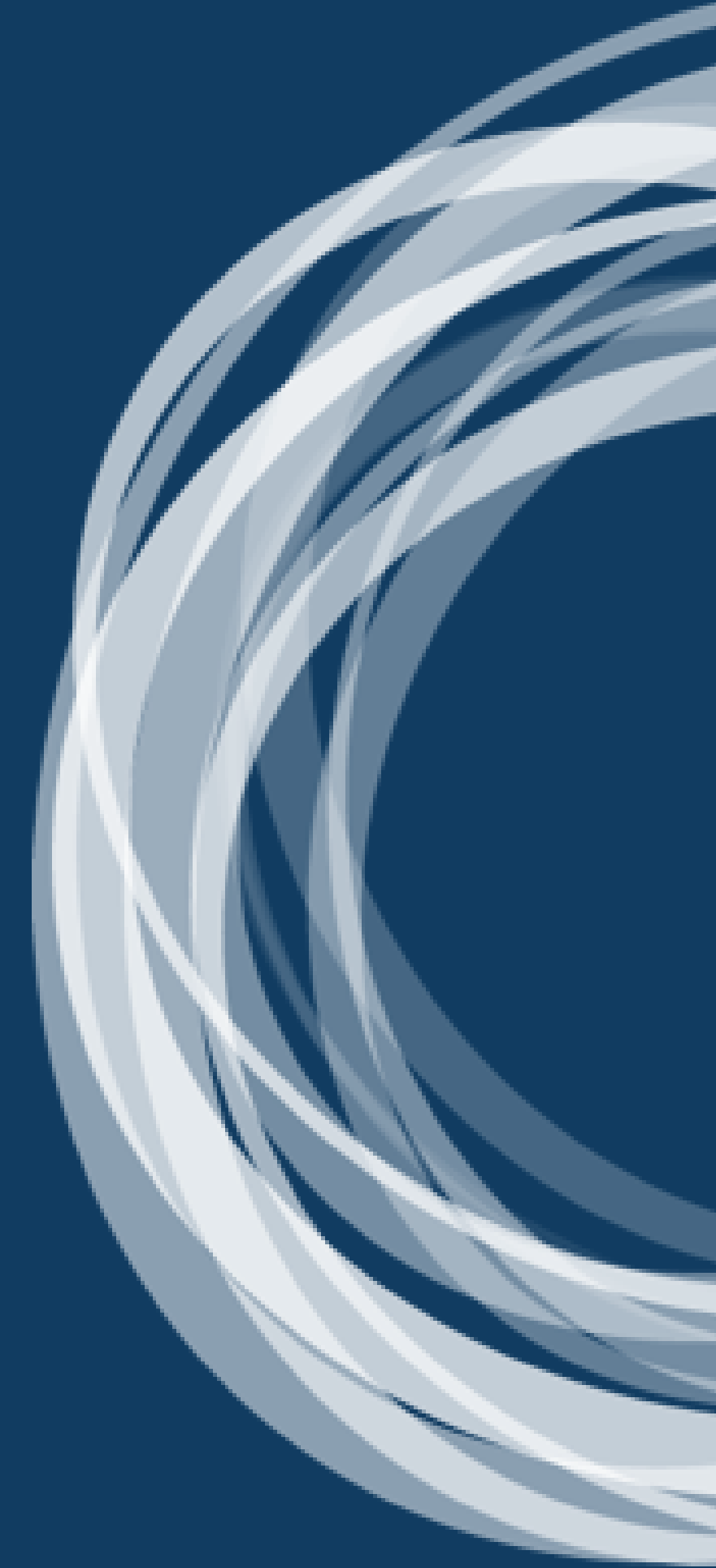


INFORM. INSPIRE. DEVELOP CIVIC LEADERS.

THE POLICY CIRCLE

ELECTION PROCESSES & INNOVATION



➤ WHAT IS THE ELECTORAL PROCESS? ◀

ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL, CONGRESSIONAL HOUSE AND SENATE ELECTIONS OCCUR EVERY TWO YEARS AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS OCCUR EVERY FOUR YEARS. STATE AND LOCAL ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE IN ANY YEAR AND AT ANY TIME, SUCH AS FOR STATEWIDE ELECTIONS OF MAYORS AND LEGISLATORS OR MORE LOCAL ELECTIONS SUCH AS MAYORS.

TRUST IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IS INTEGRAL TO ACCEPTANCE OF THE OUTCOME AS LEGITIMATE.” FOR THE AMERICAN PUBLIC, ENSURING A “SECURE AND RESILIENT ELECTORAL PROCESS” IS ESSENTIAL TO THE INTEREST AND HEALTH OF OUR DEMOCRACY. “OUR REPUBLIC FLOURISHES WHEN CITIZENS ARE CONFIDENT THAT THEIR VOTE IS FREE, FAIR, AND SECURE.” CONCERN ABOUT ELECTION FRAUD AND INTERFERENCES, THEREFORE, “JEOPARDIZES OUR ENTIRE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT, ERODING OUR TRUST IN ELECTED LEADERS AND UNDERMINING OUR CONFIDENCE IN THE SYSTEM BY WHICH THEY GOVERN – BEGINNING AT THE POLLS AND RISING UP THROUGH THE HIGHEST OFFICES IN THE LAND.”



ELECTION PROCESS



OUR PRESIDENT IS ULTIMATELY SELECTED BY THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE. THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE SYSTEM "GIVES ALL AMERICAN CITIZENS OVER THE AGE OF 18 THE RIGHT TO VOTE FOR ELECTORS, WHO IN TURN VOTE FOR THE PRESIDENT. THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT ARE THE ONLY ELECTED FEDERAL OFFICIALS CHOSEN BY THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE INSTEAD OF BY DIRECT POPULAR VOTE." EACH STATE HAS AS MANY ELECTORS AS IT HAS MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.

PRIMARIES AND CAUCUSES ARE HELD IN EACH US. STATE AND TERRITORY AS PART OF THE NOMINATING PROCESS, AND PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS TO BE VERY INFLUENTIAL IN SELECTING THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES. THE RESULTS DETERMINE HOW MANY DELEGATES EACH STATE AWARDS TO EACH NOMINEE. PRIMARY ELECTIONS ARE FINANCED AND RUN BY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS; JUST LIKE IN THE GENERAL ELECTION, VOTERS GO TO A POLLING PLACE AND CAST THEIR VOTE. CAUCASUS ARE PRIVATE EVENTS RUN BY STATE POLITICAL PARTIES. INDIVIDUALS ARE IDENTIFIED BY THE PARTY AS POTENTIAL DELEGATES, AND THE PARTY THEN HAS AN INFORMAL VOTE TO DETERMINE WHO WILL SERVE AS DELEGATES TO REPRESENT THE STATE AT THE NATIONAL PARTY CONVENTION. CONVENTIONS "FINALIZE A PARTY'S CHOICE FOR PRESIDENTIAL AND VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES" THROUGH A VOTE OF DELEGATES.

A BALLOT MEASURE "IS A LAW, ISSUE, OR QUESTION THAT APPEARS ON A STATE OR LOCAL BALLOT FOR VOTERS TO DECIDE." ALL FIFTY STATES ALLOW STATEWIDE BALLOT MEASURES ON BALLOTS, AND 49 STATES REQUIRE A BALLOT MEASURE IF THEY ARE CONSIDERING MAKING A CHANGE TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION. IN MOST STATES, BALLOT MEASURES ARE STATUTES OR AMENDMENTS REFERRED BY THE STATE LEGISLATURE, SUCH AS TAX INCREASES, OR ADVISORY QUESTIONS THAT DO NOT ACTUALLY CHANGE THE LAW BUT ARE MEANT TO GAUGE VOTER OPINION. IN 26 STATES, CITIZENS ARE ALLOWED TO INITIATE AMENDMENTS OR STATUES BY COLLECTING SIGNATURES IN SUPPORT OF PLACING A MEASURE ON THE BALLOT. SUCH A MEASURE, CALLED A BALLOT INITIATIVE, IS ESSENTIALLY "A PETITION SIGNED BY A CERTAIN MINIMUM NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS" TO "BRING ABOUT A PUBLIC VOTE ON A PROPOSED STATUTE OR CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT." IT BECOMES LAW IF IT RECEIVES ENOUGH VOTES.



FACTS TO KNOW



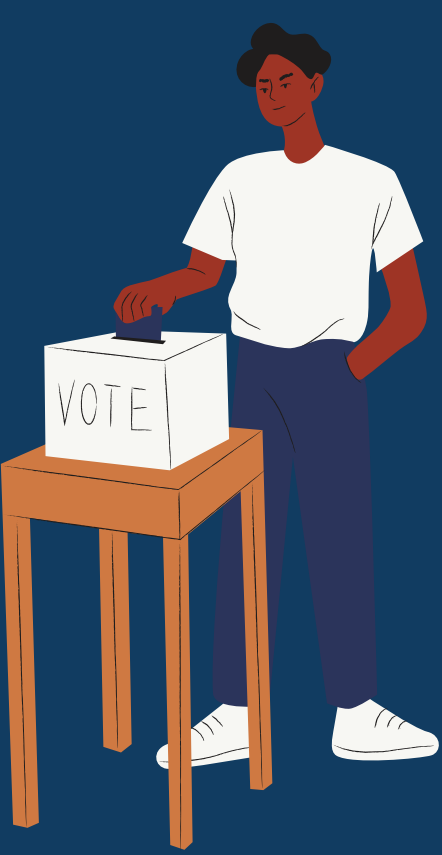
THERE ARE 36 STATES WITH LAWS THAT REQUEST OR REQUIRE VOTERS TO HAVE SOME FORM OF IDENTIFICATION WITH THEM WHEN THEY VOTE AT THEIR POLLING PLACE. HOWEVER, ELECTION FRAUD HAS OCCURRED IN EVERY STATE.

ONE CYBERSECURITY COMPANY FOUND OVER 6,000 LOCAL ELECTION OFFICIALS WERE USING EMAIL SYSTEMS WITH LIMITED PROTECTIONS FROM PHISHING ATTACKS, AND OVER 660 WERE USING THEIR PERSONAL EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR ELECTION-RELATED BUSINESS.

STATE AND NONSTATE ACTORS EMPLOYED “INFORMATIONAL MEASURES TO DISTORT THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE DURING ELECTIONS IN 24 COUNTRIES IN 2019.” SINCE 2014, RUSSIA HAS BEEN LINKED TO DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGNS IN HUNGARY, GERMANY, FINLAND, SPAIN, THE UK, AND THE U.S., PARTICULARLY BY GROUPS ASSOCIATED WITH RUSSIA SPREADING DISINFORMATION ACROSS SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

IN DECEMBER 2019, GEORGIA REMOVED 300,000 INACTIVE VOTERS FROM ITS REGISTRATION LIST, BUT THEN REINSTATED 22,000 THAT HAD BEEN TAKEN OFF DUE TO ERRORS. IN 2019, OHIO SECRETARY OF STATE FRANK LAROSE TOOK THE LIST OF 235,000 NAMES MEANT TO BE REMOVED FROM THE VOTING REGISTRATION LIST AND LET VOTING RIGHTS GROUPS “SCOUR THE DATA AND SEE WHETHER THEY COULD SPOT IRREGULARITIES.” THE GROUP FOUND OVER 40,000 NAMES HAD BEEN ACCIDENTALLY ADDED TO THE LIST BY COUNTY ELECTION OFFICIALS OR ELECTION SOFTWARE ERRORS.

➤ GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT ◀



ARTICLE 1 OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION PROVIDES THE ORIGINAL GUIDANCE ON ELECTIONS BEING WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF THE STATES. THE CONSTITUTION LIMITS THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO SPECIFIC TASKS THAT MOSTLY SUPPORT STATES AND LOCALITIES WITH ELECTIONS. THIS INCLUDES PROVIDING STATES WITH CENSUS DATA TO FACILITATE REDISTRICTING, PROVIDING FUNDING TO UPDATE ELECTION EQUIPMENT, AND ASSISTING STATES WITH ELECTION SECURITY THREATS. ADDITIONALLY, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS INCREASED INVOLVEMENT BY PASSING VOTING RIGHTS LAWS.

THE HOUSE AND SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR ELECTIONS TO THE STATES. CONGRESS ALSO OVERSEES FEDERAL ELECTIONS (THE HOUSE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE AND THE SENATE RULES AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE), CERTIFYING CONGRESSIONAL ELECTORAL COLLEGE RESULTS (THE HOUSE AND SENATE TOGETHER), AND RESOLVING CONTESTED ELECTIONS (EITHER THE HOUSE OR THE SENATE, DEPENDING ON THE CONTESTED RACE).



THE ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION (EAC) IS AN INDEPENDENT, BIPARTISAN COMMISSION THAT SERVES "AS A NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE OF INFORMATION ON ELECTION ADMINISTRATION." THE EAC ADDITIONALLY CREATES VOTING SYSTEM GUIDELINES AND OPERATES THE FEDERAL VOTING SYSTEM CERTIFICATION PROGRAM, MAINTAINS THE NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION FORM, CERTIFIES AND TESTS VOTING EQUIPMENT, AND SERVES AS A RESOURCE FOR STATES AND LOCALITIES BY CONDUCTING VOTING AND ELECTION-RELATED RESEARCH.

THE DECENTRALIZED ELECTION ADMINISTRATION IN THE U.S. LEAVES STATES AND LOCALITIES PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING ELECTIONS. THIS RANGES FROM DETERMINING VOTER ID REQUIREMENTS AND VOTER ELIGIBILITY TO PURCHASING VOTING EQUIPMENT, AND MEANS "THAT NO STATE ADMINISTERS ELECTIONS IN EXACTLY THE SAME WAY AS ANOTHER STATE, AND THERE IS QUITE A BIT OF VARIATION IN ELECTION ADMINISTRATION EVEN WITHIN STATES." EACH STATE HAS ITS OWN PROCESS OF APPOINTING ELECTION OFFICIALS ENSURING LOCAL OFFICIALS ADHERE TO ELECTION LAWS; ADMINISTERING THE STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION DATABASE; AND CALCULATING RESULTS.





➤ FRAMING THE ISSUE ◀



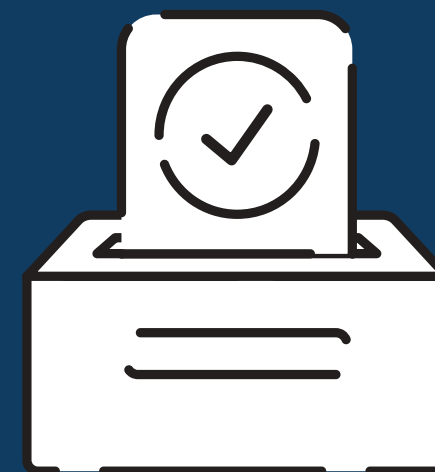
EXAMPLES OF FRAUD INCLUDE: IMPERSONATING A VOTER; REGISTERING UNDER A FALSE NAME OR ADDRESS; INELIGIBLE VOTING BY INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE NOT REGISTERED, NOT U.S. CITIZENS, OR ARE CONVICTED FELONS WHO HAVE NOT REGAINED THE RIGHT TO VOTE, ETC.; DUPLICATE VOTING; BUYING VOTES BY BRIBING LEGALLY REGISTERED VOTERS TO VOTE A CERTAIN WAY; STUFFING THE BALLOT BOX, INDICATED BY BOXES FILLED AT OR NEAR 100% (SUCH AS ONE GEORGIA PRECINCT WITH A 243% TURNOUT); COERCING OR INTIMIDATING VOTERS TO CAST FRAUDULENT BALLOTS.

PROponents of voter IDs say it prevents voter impersonation. Critics argue voter fraud is rare and voter ID laws can place an undue burden on many voters. Studies of the effects of voter ID laws on voter turnout are mixed. In a review of ten studies on voter identification laws by the Government Accountability Office, five found ID requirements had no statistically significant effect on voter turnout, another four found statistically significant decreases in voter turnout, and one found an increase in voter turnout.

THERE ARE THREE MAIN FORMS OF ELECTION INTERFERENCE:

LEGAL MEASURES, THROUGH WHICH AUTHORITIES CAN HINDER POLITICAL EXPRESSION; TECHNICAL MEASURES, WHICH ARE USED TO RESTRICT ACCESS TO NEWS SOURCES OR COMMUNICATION TOOLS; AND INFORMATIONAL MEASURES, WHEN INFORMATION IS MANIPULATED. THIS IS THE MOST COMMON METHOD.

STATE ELECTION OFFICIALS ARE OBLIGATED BY FEDERAL LAW TO KEEP VOTER REGISTRATION RECORDS AS UP TO DATE AS POSSIBLE. THIS MEANS ADDING NEW REGISTRANTS TO THE LIST AS WELL AS CANCELING REGISTRATIONS (IN THE CASE OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIED, MOVED TO ANOTHER STATE, OR HAVE BECOME LEGALLY IMCOMPETENT) TO PREVENT ELECTION FRAUD. HOWEVER, PROCESSES FOR UPDATING VOTER REGISTRATION LISTS HAVE REMOVED ELIGIBLE VOTERS BY MISTAKE, LEADING TO CONFUSION AND SUSPICIONS WITH THE PROCESS.





SOLUTIONS



ELECTION OFFICIALS AND POLL WATCHERS ACT AS THE LAST LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST FRAUD. VOTERS CAN SERVE AS POLL WATCHERS, ALSO CALLED ELECTION OBSERVERS, WHOSE JOB IT IS TO OBSERVE THE POLLING PLACE ON ELECTION DAY TO ENSURE EQUIPMENT IS PROPERLY TESTED, VOTERS CAST THEIR BALLOTS, AND OFFICIALS COUNT RESULTS.

ELECTION OFFICIALS AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS CAN STEP UP ELECTION SECURITY WITH THE HELP OF CYBERSECURITY COMPANIES OR ORGANIZATIONS. MORE COMMUNICATION AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES BETWEEN DIFFERENT LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT CAN ALSO BETTER HANDLE A THREAT.

ONE SUGGESTION FOR MAINTAINING VOTER REGISTRATION LISTS IS TO TURN TO SOURCES SUCH AS CHANGE OF ADDRESS INFORMATION FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES, THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE, THE ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION INFORMATION CENTER, OR OTHER ORGANIZATIONS WHO CAN CATCH POTENTIAL ERRORS.

➤ WHAT YOU CAN DO ◀

MEASURE -

DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOUR STATE'S UPCOMING ELECTIONS ARE? WHAT IS THE STATUS OF VOTER PARTICIPATION IN YOUR COMMUNITY OR STATE? WHAT ARE YOUR STATE'S VOTER ID LAWS OR REQUIREMENTS? WHAT ARE YOUR STATE'S ELECTION SECURITY POLICIES?



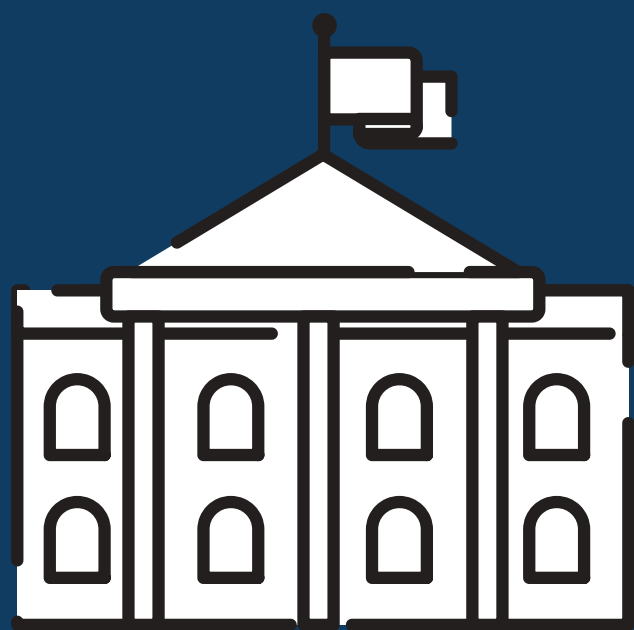
IDENTIFY -

WHO ARE THE CONTACTS AT YOUR STATE OR LOCAL ELECTION OFFICE? WHO ADMINISTERS ELECTIONS AT YOUR **STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL**?



REACH OUT -

FIND ALLIES IN YOUR COMMUNITY OR IN NEARBY TOWNS AND ELSEWHERE IN THE STATE. FOSTER COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, AND SCHOOL BOARDS.



PLAN -
SET MILESTONES BASED ON YOUR STATE'S LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR OR LOCAL COMMUNITY CALENDAR.



EXECUTE -

MAKE SURE YOU ARE REGISTERED TO VOTE. CHECK YOUR STATE'S REGISTRATION DEADLINES IF YOU ARE NOT YET REGISTERED AND SEE IF YOUR STATE OFFERS ONLINE REGISTRATION. TALK TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE ABOUT REGISTERING OR PRE-REGISTERING TO VOTE. EXPLORE YOUR BALLOT IN ADVANCE, INCLUDING CANDIDATES AND BALLOT MEASURES. INVESTIGATE YOUR STATE'S PROCESS FOR BALLOT INITIATIVES, AND CONSIDER STARTING YOUR OWN BALLOT INITIATIVE TO BRING AN IMPORTANT ISSUE TO THE ATTENTION OF VOTERS AND LEGISLATORS.

