

How to Vet Poll Workers to Mitigate Future Election Subversion Efforts



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Abstract

US election workers preparing for the midterms are confronting a bevy of threats as they seek to conduct secure elections while fighting an onslaught of mis- and disinformation that continues to undermine public confidence in them. These threats include various forms of cyber and information threats, now not only from outside actors, but inside ones as well. While much of the attention on insider threats has centered around security breaches by full-time election staff, poll workers are a frequently overlooked target. Poll workers—who assist with in-person voting on an infrequent basis, often after limited training—continue to be relied on heavily in most states to ensure voters successfully cast a ballot. And while poll workers played a critical role in helping ensure the successful administration of the 2020 election, support for the myth that this election was stolen from former president Donald Trump has only grown since then, with large numbers of local, state, and federal candidates perpetuating it now as well. While much attention has been paid in recent months to “Big Lie” candidates running for office and the risk of interference by [election observers](#), there has been less conversation about how false narratives about election integrity may motivate rank-and-file poll workers. In fact, election deniers have identified poll workers as critical to their success in future elections. In October of 2021, Matthew Seifried, the Republican National Committee’s election integrity director for Michigan, [said](#), “Being a poll worker, you just have so many more rights and things you can do to stop something than [as] a poll challenger.” In February of this year, former president Trump pressed his supporters to become election workers to—[quote](#)—“take back our great country from the ground up.” And on the eve of Michigan’s recent state primary, Wayne County leaders [encouraged](#) poll workers to ignore election rules at a training session. This paper offers a range of potential solutions for addressing this threat, so that electoral management bodies with unique needs, timeframes, and resource constraints can feel more empowered to counter it for future elections, including potentially the upcoming midterms.

Keywords

Election integrity, election security, election interference, election subversion, election sabotage, elections

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Introduction

Insider threats are not [new to election administrators](#). As the Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC) director, who formerly served as director of elections for South Carolina, [recently noted](#), “[Election officials] can’t conduct elections without bringing in lots of new employees or seasonal workers, so it increases that insider threat.”

One key difference between pre-2020 elections and post-2020 elections is the emergence of election deniers: individuals who falsely maintain that the 2020 presidential election was stolen. Their recent involvement in the elections process, and [ongoing recruitment](#) efforts of like-minded individuals, has led to an [uptick](#) in election interference efforts, raising concerns that insiders could be used to alter the outcome of future elections.

While a great deal of attention has understandably been paid to [rogue election administrators](#), election results can also be manipulated by infiltrating the selection and training of poll workers so that their ranks include individuals who may be willing to break the rules to help their preferred candidate or political party win. As election law expert Rick Hasen has [noted](#):

[T]hanks to the Electoral College system, a shift of about 45,000 voters across three states (a relatively small number of voters when vote totals exceed 150 million votes) would have turned President Trump into the 2020 election winner and President Biden into the loser. The risk is that a few unscrupulous actors could make minor changes in vote totals that could prove decisive in a very close election, whether it is the presidential contest or another one.

Even if rogue poll workers are unable to alter the outcome of an election, there are many ways they could cast doubt on its legitimacy. These include [tampering with voting equipment](#) in a manner that sows chaos and confusion, [creating conditions for long lines](#) in polling places to dampen voter turnout, or [providing incorrect information](#) that effectively disenfranchises some voters.

The selection and training of poll workers in the United States has always been largely overseen by [local election officials](#). And there is nothing to suggest that a substantial number of poll workers have recently tried to steal or rig an election. To the contrary, poll worker efforts were [integral](#) to ensuring the highly successful administration of the 2020 presidential election, and they have continued to ensure safe and secure elections in 2022, despite an [unprecedented climate of distrust and antagonism](#) and growing threats to election workers themselves.

The problem now is that [state and local election officials](#) in many states are seeing a substantial influx of partisans (recruited by their party’s national committee and like-minded organizations) who seek to become poll workers because they are inspired by fraud that does not exist. While the vast majority of poll workers are likely to perform without incident, including some whose concerns about election integrity motivate them to serve as poll workers, the aforementioned developments create the risk that election deniers could become entrenched in official election operations and use their new positions to undermine the process. This [surge in interest](#) comes against the backdrop of efforts by former president Donald Trump’s allies, such as Steve Bannon, to carry out a “[precinct committee strategy](#)” that aims to install election-denying Trump loyalists in local Republican Party positions and election posts.

To be sure, poll workers can face criminal prosecution for assisting those who seek to [threaten or intimidate](#) voters or other election workers. And poll workers have an affirmative obligation to ensure fair and accessible elections and to protect the integrity of the elections process. As the Montgomery, Maryland Board of Elections

[notes](#), “In accordance with federal and state law, they [poll workers] must perform all of the duties assigned by the local Board of Elections and perform their duties faithfully, diligently, and without partiality or prejudice.”

But increasing efforts to [recruit election deniers as election workers](#) create a real concern that some poll workers may be willing to attempt sabotaging an election out of a mistaken desire to make the election fair. Election officials and their partners have an affirmative obligation to implement steps to vet individuals seeking to volunteer and create additional safeguards, if necessary, to ensure the integrity of future elections.

This paper focuses on targeted measures state and local election officials can take to prevent, detect, and/or recover from rogue poll workers seeking to cast doubt on the integrity of future elections without seeming excessively suspicious. None of the guidance is a “silver bullet” for countering rogue workers; not all of it will be relevant for each election official helping recruit poll workers, and some officials already take many of these steps. Many of the proposed measures could also take substantial time and/or resources to develop and implement. But in addressing rogue election worker solutions, this guidance provides remedies for some of the toughest issues that election officials could encounter.

If there’s only one thing election officials take away from this paper, it’s to try to have two or more poll workers doing tasks that involve using election systems, handling election materials, and reviewing election records (that is, the [“two-person rule”](#)) to ensure strict adherence to impartiality. Such tasks could include checking in voters at the polling place, providing voters the correct ballot, and ensuring that voters’ ballots are successfully cast. Close adherence to this rule makes it more likely that election officials, observers, the media, and others can verify the security and accuracy of poll workers, rather than assuming that the workers’ conduct is proper.

Prevention

1. Identify and define poll worker threats

As the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) has previously [noted](#), “Individuals with access to election infrastructure can, at times, represent potential risks to the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of election systems and information.” This not only includes state and local election officials, information technology staff, vendor support staff, and former employees, but temporary staff, such as poll workers, who are [often](#) provided unique training, knowledge, skills, and authority by election officials in order to serve voters on Election Day.

Because poll workers have the potential to cause harm, it is important that election officials conduct a risk assessment of the vulnerabilities a rogue poll worker could seek to exploit against the controls that exist in their election systems. For example, if a [rogue poll worker](#) stops a voter who does not have a photo ID from voting in a state that allows voters without identification to sign an affidavit and vote, the outcome of the election will probably not be affected, but it could disenfranchise that voter and be a news story that erodes public confidence in the integrity of the election results.

Once election officials have an accurate sense of their vulnerabilities to insider threats, they should document their risk assessment (internally) and build out an insider threat mitigation program. As CISA notes in its [Election Infrastructure Insider Threat Mitigation Guide](#), building such a program requires “establishing robust standard operating procedures, managing physical and digital access control, deploying zero trust security principles, and implementing chain of custody processes.” Such actions can help identify gaps in current practices and inform the organization’s broader approach to risk management. For example, election officials should consider developing standard operating and chain-of-custody procedures that include guidance for all poll worker roles. This can help enable poll workers to confirm their own work and the work of their colleagues, which could help deter harmful behavior and verify compliance.

2. Follow best practices and principles for recruiting poll workers

Begin by seeking to [recruit individuals](#) who understand the mission of election administration and appear accountable. Such individuals [often](#) take on responsibility actively, make few excuses, manage expectations, collaborate, and do not expect praise. According to the US Election Assistance Commission, [best practices](#) for recruiting such individuals include creating a marketing strategy focused on why election workers volunteer, such as civic duty and family tradition; developing specialized recruiting approaches for target groups who can be critical to filling the poll worker ranks, including high school and college students, business people and corporate employees, civic group members, government workers, and existing election workers; and being clear about what is—and is not—involved in being an election worker. Someone shouldn’t seek to become a poll worker with [the intent of fomenting conflict](#) at the polling place to disrupt voting or overturn legitimate vote counts.

Upon joining a local election office, poll workers should be required to sign a [code of conduct](#) that clearly articulates expected behavior and outlines consequences for violations. The code of conduct should include examples of violations that justify removal, including a failure to follow established election procedures and exhibiting disrespectful behavior towards the public, co-workers, and/or election staff.

For other ideas on how to recruit good workers—and avoid rogue workers—in the current climate, election officials may want to also consider speaking with their human resource colleagues in state and local government. Until now, election officials’ primary recruiting issue has been finding enough workers. But in 2020, a number of

jurisdictions found themselves with [a surplus of poll workers](#) due to a surge in interest and avid recruiting from election officials and others. Human resource colleagues can offer insights on how to recruit—and vet—large numbers of workers quickly in other contexts that could be relevant here. For example, they may know of temp agencies that are more effective at vetting potential “bad apples.”

3. Follow best practices and principles for vetting poll workers

At minimum, these practices include [noting the reason\(s\)](#) someone wants to be a poll worker, closely observing an individual’s behavior during training (including how they respond to [scenarios](#) when a poll worker tries to interfere with voting), and ascertaining whether these individuals plan to [report to, or coordinate with](#), people other than election officials during the election. If a poll worker indicates that they expect to report on Election Day activities to people other than election administrators, it is fair to wonder whether they are working at the polling place to provide voters with the best election experience.

For election officials with greater concerns about vetting poll workers, conducting written *voir dire* for prospective poll workers may also be effective. One way judges have traditionally helped ensure an impartial jury is to require prospective jurors to fill out a written juror questionnaire to [identify potential bias](#). Such questionnaires can be [effective](#) because of their ability to elicit truthful information from potential jurors about bias, including attitudes about a specific case and issues raised by the case.

Election officials could similarly consider using a detailed questionnaire to identify bias in potential poll workers. Questions could include: Have you been a poll worker in previous elections? If not, why do you want to serve now? Did any person or group encourage you to serve as a poll worker? If so, who? And what do you believe are the most important responsibilities of being a poll worker?

Such questionnaires can help elicit information from potential poll workers about election integrity bias, including attitudes about the legitimacy of US elections, the security of voting equipment, the efficacy of certain voting methods (for example, mail voting), and the effectiveness/integrity of election administrators. Conducting *voir dire* through written questionnaires could uncover information that is relevant to a poll worker’s ability to be fair and impartial. And if an individual is not candid when responding to a questionnaire, that in itself can be helpful if problems later arise.

Another way to vet potential poll workers is to ask questions during training. For example, election officials could ask prospective poll workers about their knowledge of the election process and whether they’ve had [specific experiences](#) that inform their views on the process. Election officials need to be cognizant of potential poll workers who may not be able to put aside their personal feelings and apply election laws [impartially](#).

Ideally, prospective poll workers will respond truthfully to questions about potential bias, but that may not always be the case, particularly for individuals seeking to alter election results to benefit a preferred candidate(s). One way to ensure that such behavior does not escape notice is to consider reviewing public records during the poll worker screening process. Not only might election officials want to know whether a potential poll worker has a criminal history, they might also want to know the type of crime in which the individual was involved. For example, an election official dealing with harassment and intimidation tied to the 2020 presidential election will likely want to screen potential workers for anyone with a record of seeking [to overturn legitimate elections](#) or [making threats of violence](#) against election workers. Many states have laws that prohibit someone from serving as a poll worker if they have been convicted of [certain crimes](#). Unfortunately, none of these laws can ensure that individuals who are hostile, harassing, and/or abusive towards election officials will be kept out of the poll worker ranks.

Employment records can also show whether a potential poll worker used to work for or with someone involved in an election, or if the nature of their job could affect their ability to impartially administer an election. For example, it would be helpful to know if a poll worker is a paid employee of a political party, even if that does not bar them from working the polls.

Locating information relevant to potential poll workers is often [challenging](#). Internet searches and scanning social media accounts can yield results, but the time investment can be substantial. And there are times when the information discovered online may not be accurate or current, raising questions about the quality of the search results. Any efforts by election officials to engage in this kind of activity should be done in compliance with all applicable laws and in concert with legal counsel.

Detection

1. Follow best practices and principles for training poll workers

Due to a number of factors, including the [ongoing targeting of election workers](#), a lot of new poll workers are likely to be involved in future elections. It is important that new workers not only know how to do their jobs but are aware of what their fellow workers are supposed to be doing to help prevent future election subversion efforts or even innocuous mistakes.

One way to achieve this is through poll worker education and participation. It is important to train poll workers to look for suspicious or questionable behavior and to provide a way for poll workers to report such behavior, while remaining anonymous. Poll worker understanding of election subversion signals and a willingness to report them can be a good safeguard against the insider threat.

Election officials should make sure that poll workers stay abreast of any election-focused threats that could affect them, understand how to communicate and respond to election interference efforts, practice proper cyber “hygiene,” determine how to identify false information and where to report inaccuracies, and know how to discuss the elections process in their communities. Many of these practices echo those promoted in the EI-ISAC’s [Cyber STRONG](#), a program that provides employee training on education, communications, device and network security, and public awareness.

According to [CISA](#), it’s also important that poll workers “be retrained on any systems, data, and security practices prior to every election. This is especially important for mis-, dis-, and mal-information (MDM) trends, including MDM risks specific to the state or jurisdiction.” Such opportunities are especially important for poll workers who may not join the elections office with full knowledge of election processes or how they may be impacted by MDM.

One way to successfully conduct retraining is through tabletop exercises—simulated events to prepare for a range of [potential cyber and physical threats to the voting process](#). Increasing numbers of poll workers are being trained on how to prepare for a range of hypothetical risks to election operations, and such training is only likely to grow in importance amid [increasing concerns](#) about the harms of false election information and the targeting of elections officials. Such exercises should cover ways a rogue election worker could attempt to interfere with an election process and potential responses to ensure the elections process is as protected as possible. CISA has manuals to help conduct these tabletops for both [cyber security and physical security](#) scenarios.

2. Follow best practices and principles for deploying a poll worker with suspected ulterior motives if you must use them

There may be reasons an election official cannot reject a poll worker who appears more interested in interfering with the elections process than protecting them. For example, in some places, election officials are required to pick poll workers from lists [submitted by political parties](#) in order to ensure bipartisan representation at polling places. In other instances, it may not be readily apparent to election officials whether a poll worker will do good a job on election day or try to sabotage an election. Whatever the reason, it is important that workers whom election officials do not trust completely work at voting locations with adequate safeguards to ensure that any potential malfeasance can be spotted and mitigated quickly. Here are examples of mitigation measures that some election officials already employ:

Deploy trusted, experienced election officials to as many polling places as possible, so that questionable behavior can be identified and corrected quickly, even if that means breaking up polling place staffs that have successfully worked together for many elections; I judiciously helped assign experienced officials across voting locations in jurisdictions when I [previously worked in elections](#). If not enough experienced, trustworthy poll workers are available to cover all polling places, it may be worth [deploying full-time election officials](#) to assist with voting at some polling places. The first priority is ensuring that the election is safe, secure, and accurate, and the presence of experienced, trusted workers is critical to meeting this goal.

Staff polling places with individuals from different political parties. Political diversity is not a guarantee against election sabotage, and many jurisdictions could have difficulty achieving this goal due to political homogeneity. But the goal is still worthwhile, particularly during hyper-polarized times.

Try to create [diverse](#) poll worker teams that include different genders, races, and ethnicities. Election officials should strive to have poll worker teams at each polling place that are [representative](#) of the jurisdiction they are working in. Recent research has revealed that diverse teams are [more effective](#). Diverse groups focus more on facts, process those facts more carefully, and are more innovative, all of which increases the group's joint potential. Creating more diverse groups of poll workers can also help ensure that a single worker who tries to go rogue is met with resistance from their coworkers.

Beef up support for polling places. This could [include](#) increasing the number of rovers that support your polling places on Election Day, especially in [precincts with fewer experienced workers](#); making sure the Election Day “command center” is aware of the poll worker insider threat and knows how to respond; coordinating with local law enforcement ahead of Election Day; and providing an Election Day tip line with a specific extension for election subversion activities that goes directly to senior election officials and/or law enforcement.

Recovery

1. Respond to election interference efforts promptly and thoroughly

An effective recovery from an election interference attack is only possible if you have a plan in place for what to do if a poll worker tries to interfere with voting. You need to have a detailed, step-by-step process laid out for [removing such a worker and calling law enforcement](#), if necessary. A rapid, rehearsed, and scripted response will help ensure that potentially disruptive workers are replaced in a timely manner, with negligible impact on the voting process. As the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency has [noted](#):

SOPS [Standard Operating Procedures and chain of custody procedures] should include guidance for all role types, including temporary staff and volunteers. This may include use of the two-person rule or control forms, which can be an effective measure for temporary staff and volunteers to check each other's work, deter harmful behavior, and verify compliance.

2. Communicate corrective steps to the public

Public confidence in elections can be [seriously damaged](#) by credible allegations that poll workers accessed election infrastructure inappropriately. As the Brennan Center has previously [noted](#), when an effort to interfere with the election has been detected, or there is a credible allegation of such an effort, state and local election officials should publicly explain the steps they have taken to investigate the allegations, how/if they have confirmed the truth or falsity of the allegations, and how they have responded to mitigate the possible risk if the allegations are true.

How Poll Workers Can Cast Doubt on US Elections

Since the 2020 election, there have been a small but growing number of [instances](#) in which conspiracy theorists gained or sought to gain access to voting equipment. There have also been a growing number of instances that involved [rogue election officials facilitating such efforts](#). For example, in [June of 2021](#), the Georgia secretary of state's office replaced Coffee County, Georgia's election management system after it learned that the then county elections supervisor allowed unauthorized individuals into a secure facility, which enabled these individuals to copy [software and data](#) from the voting machines used by Coffee County. And in August of 2021, Colorado officials [announced](#) that Mesa County, Colorado Clerk Tina Peters allowed an unauthorized individual into a secure facility in May 2021, compromising the county's voting equipment. Mesa County subsequently had to replace its voting equipment.

A recent Brennan Center letter [notes](#) that “most jurisdictions with known [voting machine] breaches have promptly replaced election equipment after physical access to the equipment was provided to unvetted parties. When officials were unable to verify chain of custody, replacement of the equipment was the best way to ensure that voters would be using machines free from possible corruption.”

If a poll worker or other individual tries to subvert the election process by tampering with a piece of election equipment, such as a [voting machine](#), jurisdictions should have plans in place to remove both the affected piece of equipment and the perpetrator. If officials are unable to verify the chain of custody for that piece of election infrastructure, it needs to be replaced without undue delay by another piece of equipment or process so that voters can cast their ballots.

Compromised election systems are not the only risk to election integrity in the event of an attempt to interfere with the process. If poll workers seek to sow distrust, they can use their proximity to election equipment or their designated authority to make it *appear* as if there was election interference. For instance, a Michigan gubernatorial candidate earlier this year sent this [message](#) to poll workers: “If you see something you don't like happening with the machines, if you see something going on, unplug it from the wall.” Unplugging a voting machine will do nothing except activate the machine's backup battery, so it does not prevent voters from voting. But engaging in such shenanigans could certainly further erode public trust in the integrity of our elections.

CISA has previously warned that bad-faith actors could use publicly available voter registration data to spread [false claims](#) of a compromised election infrastructure, such as a hacked voter registration database. In the current environment, rogue poll workers could try to use their status to spread false claims of compromised voting systems or other election infrastructure as part of efforts to sow distrust.

How to Respond to Allegations of Poll Worker Interference

1. Conduct a prompt investigation and move to replace those interfering with the election, if needed.

Poll worker interference can disrupt the administration of the election and undermine confidence in our democracy. For example, a Michigan law [states](#) that an election worker “shall” challenge a voter if a partisan election challenger “knows or has good reason to suspect” the voter is ineligible. If a partisan challenger decides to make bad-faith challenges to voter credentials, that is likely to [slow down the intake of voters](#), creating lines that some voters may not be able to wait out, even if the challenges are ultimately unsuccessful. And if bad-faith election workers [conspire](#) with partisan observers to accept or prolong baseless challenges, the risk of voters being disenfranchised and confidence in the elections being eroded increases. If such a situation were to arise, best practice is to immediately advise the election challenger of state law and the consequences for failing to follow it, while removing and replacing any poll workers enabling such behavior.

Likewise, if a rogue poll worker tries to breach a piece of election equipment or interfere with the voting process, the worker should be relieved of their poll worker duties immediately, and any equipment that might have been tampered with should be removed from the voting process for further inspection. State and local election officials should then quickly investigate the rogue actor’s behavior to determine the extent and scope of any potential election interference. Beyond questioning the alleged perpetrator, this should include removing any affected election infrastructure from use until it has been assessed and cleared.

It is important that election officials not only determine the facts promptly but have contingency plans in place for dealing with such a scenario. This includes having extra workers on hand to replace rogue workers and having spares of different election materials/machines to ensure that attempts at interfering with the voting process have as few consequences as possible.

2. Communicate corrective actions to the public.

Confidence in future elections can be damaged by persuasive allegations of interference in the voting process. State and local election officials should explain publicly what steps they have taken to investigate the allegations and how they have confirmed their truth or falsity. Officials should also explain the scope of any interference and how that impacts the scope of their corrective actions. For instance, officials can indicate that they spoke with other poll workers and determined that an alleged effort to interfere with the voting process did not occur. Or they can indicate that they confirmed through conversations with the alleged wrongdoer and other material witnesses that the actions taken were accidental, not intentional, and take corrective action to ensure the worker is performing their duties properly going forward.

How to Prevent and Detect Future Election Interference Efforts

To successfully carry out the steps above, [robust safeguards](#) for preventing and detecting election interference efforts must be in place. If individuals recruited for poll worker positions do not understand the mission of their local election office or possess a high degree of accountability for their roles, it could be difficult to determine the truth, falsity, or scope of an alleged election interference effort. State and local election officials should consider taking the following actions if they have not done so already:

1. Give poll workers access to only what they need

Election officials should ensure that poll workers only have access to election systems and materials that are needed for performing their official responsibilities, and only to the extent that those responsibilities require it (this is known as the “[principle of least privilege](#)”).

When possible, election officials should require that two or more poll workers be present when operating election systems, handling ballots, and examining election records.

2. Establish observable procedures and monitor for inappropriate activity

Election officials should consider creating [transparency protocols](#) for poll workers to ensure that poll workers who administer an election are doing so in a manner that does not interfere with the voting process. For example, transparency protocols previously helped [Colorado officials](#) identify a source of leaked voting system information.

If necessary, funding for these efforts should be provided by the federal government and/or state governments so that election officials have greater visibility into the voting process unfolding at each of their voting locations. This could enable election subversion efforts to more quickly be identified and remedied. For example, a jurisdiction with electronic pollbooks that does not already have a sophisticated analytics & reporting dashboard should consider purchasing one. Procuring such a dashboard could enable election officials to better evaluate, in real-time, how well a poll worker checks in voters, confirms their registration, and assigns them a ballot. If, for example, a poll worker at a particular e-pollbook is taking significantly longer to process voters than his fellow workers, and more time than the election office anticipated, that could justify closer scrutiny.

Election officials should consider offering copies of poll worker training materials, with redactions for anything that could compromise the security of the electoral infrastructure or election workers, to political parties, candidates, and anyone else who might be [trying to also train poll workers](#). Some could argue that sharing such training provides a roadmap for how to subvert an election, but most of what poll workers do is public and not sensitive. Additionally, sharing such information could help others better understand the election process, potentially reducing the likelihood for conflict and election sabotage efforts at polling places.

More election jurisdictions should also consider allowing non-partisan election observation. Non-partisan observation provides an opportunity for the public to learn directly about the election process, bolstering confidence that elections are free and fair. It can also help check malicious actors, including rogue poll workers, who are seeking to undermine confidence in elections through [improper actions or baseless assertions](#) about election rigging and malfeasance.

3. Conduct post-mortems following each election.

Election officials often try to measure how poll workers performed to improve the administration of subsequent elections. For example, during the 2020 general election, the Washington, DC Board of Elections evaluated whether each polling place opened on time, opened its voting equipment on time, and returned its ballots properly. Election officials should consider adding an indicator for evidence of election subversion. For example, if a poll worker goes to clean a voting machine and finds an error message that [says](#) “USB device change detected,” that should be [documented](#) and investigated immediately to ensure that it does not recur. Such post-mortems can help assess what worked and what did not to counter potential insider threats.

Conclusion

Millions of Americans dedicate themselves to sustaining the [backbone of US democracy](#): its election process. In past elections, these workers were considered part of a system based on civic-minded volunteers and mutual trust. Some jurisdictions may have faced challenges recruiting and training enough workers to conduct smooth elections, but ensuring that those who signed up to be poll workers would be fair was a remote concern at best, and one many election officials addressed simply by underscoring the need to be nonpartisan when serving as a poll worker.

That is no longer the case. Today, it is imperative that election officials and their partners on the front lines of elections—state and local governments, federal partners, vendors, and others—have the tools and resources to manage risks to the country’s election infrastructure, including the ability, if necessary, to ensure that anyone seeking to interfere in the administration of a free and fair election is unsuccessful. Failing to stop such an action not only threatens the integrity of future election results; it threatens the legitimacy of American democracy itself.