

March 14, 2026 • Networking the Networks • Faith & Fire

Church Ballot Collection Project

The Ballots Are Ripe for the Harvest...



Legal Stuff

Disclaimer

This presenter is not an attorney. This presentation should not be construed as legal advice. This presentation is for general informational purposes only. We recommend consulting with a qualified attorney tailored to your specific situation. (March 14, 2026).

The Good News

There is excellent, experienced legal counsel eagerly ready and willing to help you! We'll cover that when we come to the Resources at the end of this presentation, and that info is also included in your packet.



About your presenter, Carol Davis

Who is this person who claims to speak authoritatively on elections?

- An election geek for 2 decades
- Election Judge • Poll Worker • Poll Watcher • Deputy Voter Registrar
- Researcher • Student • Teacher • Statewide & Nationwide Trainer
- Chair of Illinois Conservative Union since 2012 (ICU – www.ilpac.org)
- Lead for the Illinois Election Integrity Program (IEIP – www.ieip.org)
- Lead for the Illinois Coalition of the national Election Integrity Network
- A Grannie on a Mission



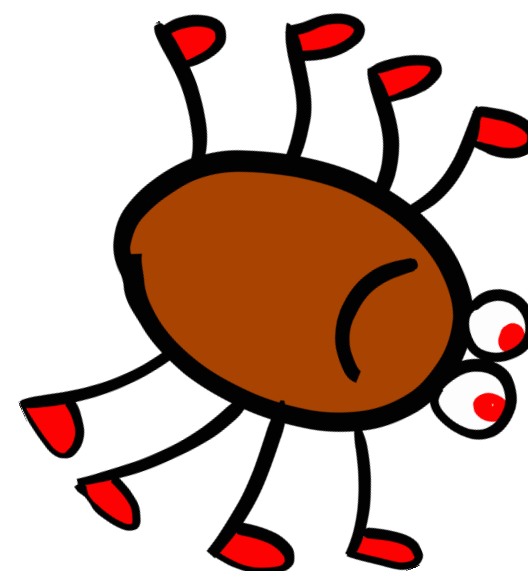
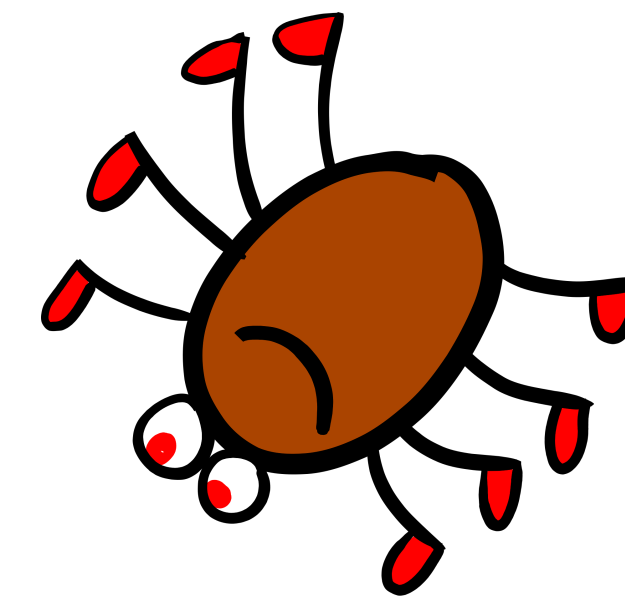
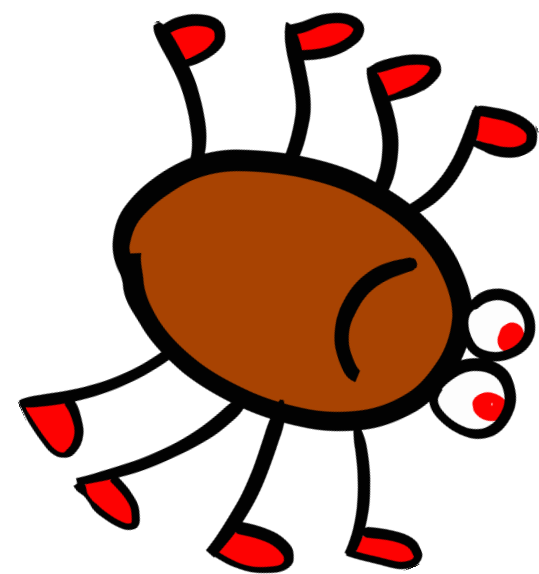
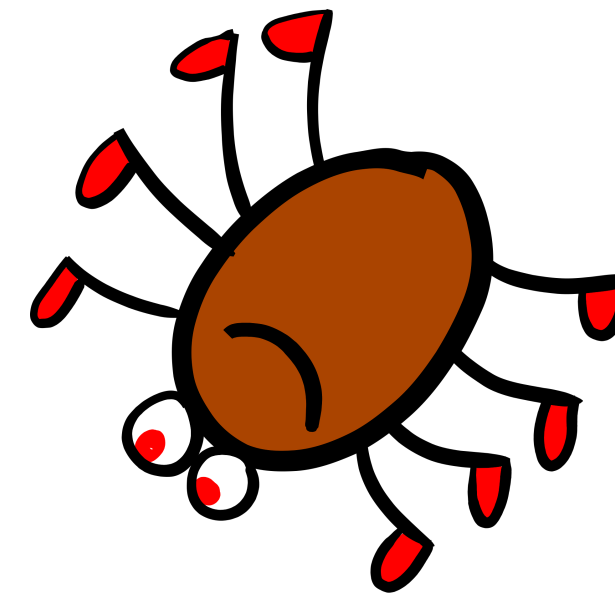
Is this about **POLITICS**?!

Absolutely not – this is a non-partisan project.

The definition of politics:

Poli = Many

tics = Blood-sucking insects



Say NO to ~~Ballot Harvesting~~

Say YES to “Ballot Collecting” or “Ballot Gathering”

- We don't like it!
- But it's the law in many states – we're going to compare California and Illinois
- We want to do away with it
- Until we can elect legislators to do away with it
- We must use these laws to level the playing field
- OR possibly even give ourselves an advantage!



First things first: Pray about it

If your church is meant for this project, God will show you.

When the godly are in authority, the people rejoice.

But when the wicked are in power, they groan. – Proverbs 29:2

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free... – Galatians 5:1

Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow. – Isaiah 1:17

Choose some wise, understanding and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you. – Deuteronomy 1:13



CA & IL – can you top this?!

California: Ballot Harvesting expanded in 2016

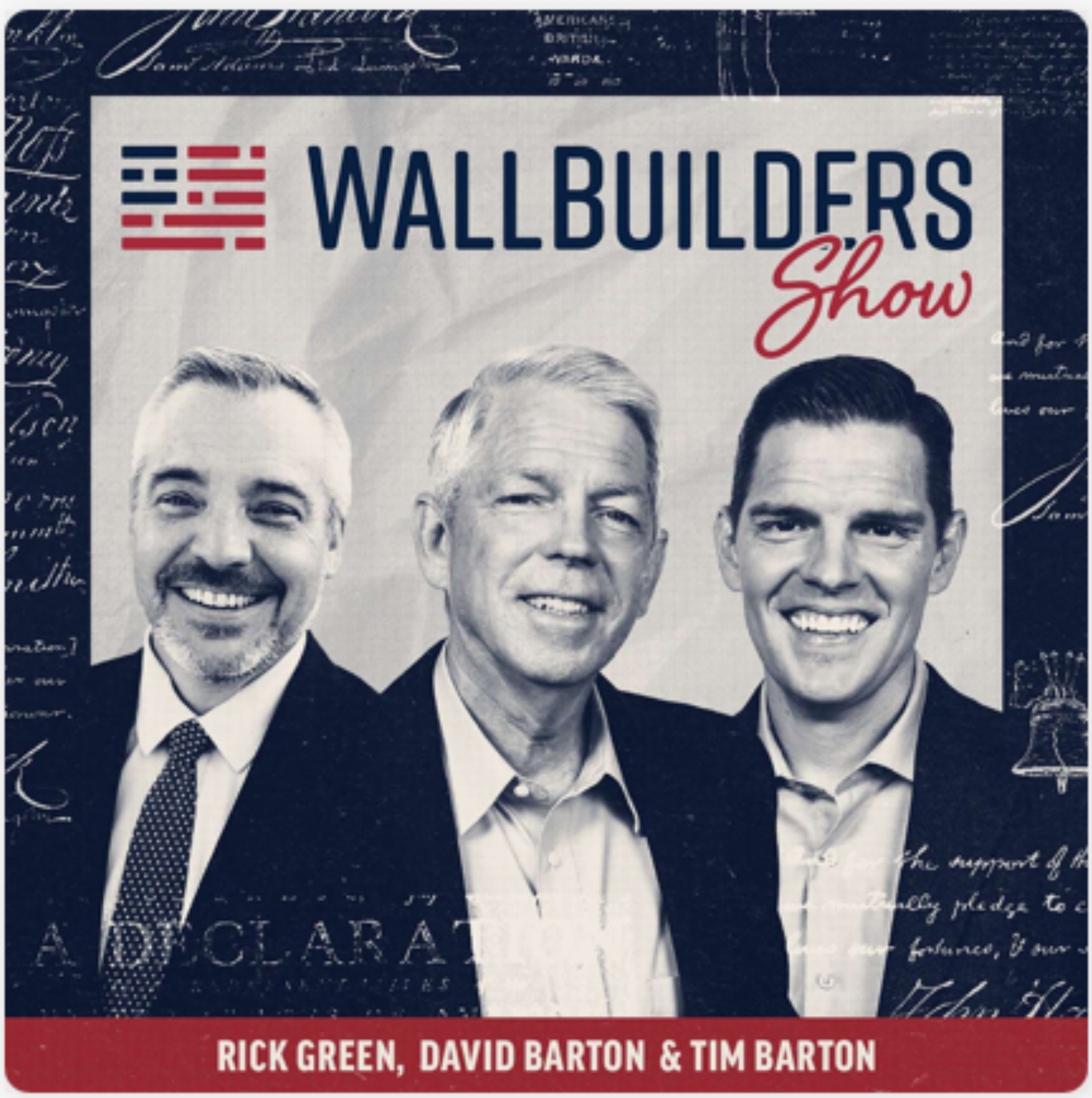


Illinois: Ballot Harvesting passed 2019



The Power of the Vote

How Active Church Participation and Biblical Citizenship Transformed California Elections • The WallBuilders Show • December 11, 2023



Real Impact – Calvary Chapel, Chino Hills, CA



CHARISMA

Culture

California Megachurch Boosts Christian Voter Turnout Nationwide for 2024

By James Lasher Nov 1, 2023

California Catholic Daily

Calvary Chapel Chino Hills collects 20,000 ballots

"If we want to win, we need to take advantage of the laws"

October 30th, 2023 | Politics

THE CHRISTIAN POST

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Megachurch that collected nearly 20K ballots challenges other churches to step up in 2024

By Ryan Foley, Christian Post Reporter | Saturday, October 28, 2023



Churchgoers drop off their ballots at Calvary Chapel Chino Hills in Chino, California. | Gina Gleason

Comparing Illinois and California

Similarities:

- Both states allow ballot collection by anyone with voter permission
 - Neither state limits the number of ballots one person can collect
 - Both require written authorization/designation from voters
 - Both offer multiple return methods (mail, drop boxes, in-person)
-

Key Differences:

Illinois is more permissive:

- No restrictions on paying collectors
- Professional delivery services explicitly allowed
- Simpler authorization process



Comparing Illinois and California

California has more restrictions:

- Prohibits compensation based on number of ballots returned
- Requires designated persons to return ballots within 3 days of receiving them from voters
- Mandatory ballot tracking systems for voters to confirm receipt
- More detailed fraud penalties

Both states are considered to have relatively permissive ballot collection laws compared to states that restrict collection to family members only or prohibit it entirely. The comparison shows that while both allow third-party ballot collection, California has implemented more regulatory safeguards around the practice.



Comparing Illinois and California

Key Differences Summary

Illinois is More Permissive in:

- **No compensation restrictions** - Professional delivery services explicitly allowed
- **Simpler authorization process** - Basic form on envelope
- **No specific timing limits** for collectors (just election day deadline)

California is More Restrictive in:

- **Compensation banned** - Cannot pay based on number of ballots
- **Timing requirements** - Must deliver within 3 days of receiving
- **More detailed fraud penalties** and security measures

Both States Are Similar in:

- **No limits** on number of ballots one person can collect
- **Anyone can collect** with proper authorization/designation
- **Written permission required** from voters
- **Multiple return options** available



Comparing Illinois and California

Legal Citations

Illinois

- **Primary Law:** 10 ILCS 5/19-6 (Illinois Election Code Section 19-6)
- **Last Updated:** Public Act 102-668 (effective November 15, 2021)

California

- **Primary Law:** California Elections Code Section 3017
- **Last Updated:** January 1, 2019



Comparing Illinois and California

Bottom Line

Both Illinois and California allow relatively permissive ballot collection compared to many other states. The main differences are that California has specific rules about compensation and timing, while Illinois has fewer detailed restrictions but allows professional delivery services. Both states require voter permission and have no limits on the number of ballots one person can collect.



Comparing Illinois and California

Illinois vs California Ballot Collection Laws: Side-by-Side Comparison

Basic Overview

Aspect	Illinois	California
Legal Authority	10 ILCS 5/19-6	Elections Code Section 3017
Is Ballot Collection Legal?	Yes, with voter authorization	Yes, with voter designation
Common Name	Ballot Collection	Ballot Collection/"Ballot Harvesting"



Comparing Illinois and California

Who Can Collect Ballots?

Who Can Collect	Illinois	California
Any Person	✓ Yes - Any person authorized by the voter	✓ Yes - Any person designated by the voter
Family Members	✓ Yes (with authorization)	✓ Yes (with designation)
Campaign Workers	✓ Yes (with authorization)	✓ Yes (with designation)
Political Organizations	✓ Yes (with authorization)	✓ Yes (with designation)
Hospital/Care Facility Staff	✓ Yes (special provision for patients)	✓ Yes (with designation)
Professional Delivery Services	✓ Yes (licensed motor carriers)	✓ Yes (with designation)



Comparing Illinois and California







Limits on Number of Ballots

Limits	Illinois	California
Maximum Ballots Per Person	✗ No limit specified	✗ No limit specified
Can Collect Unlimited Ballots?	✓ Yes, as long as each voter authorizes	✓ Yes, as long as each voter designates



Comparing Illinois and California

Authorization/Designation Requirements

Requirements	Illinois	California
Written Permission Required?	 Yes - Authorization form on envelope	 Yes - Voter must designate the person
Voter Signature Required?	 Yes	 Yes (implied in designation)
Collector Signature Required?	 Yes	 Not specifically required
Form Language	Specific form: "I (voter) authorize (person) to take the necessary steps to have this ballot delivered promptly..."	Voter designates another person to return ballot



Comparing Illinois and California

Timing Requirements

Timing	Illinois	California
Deadline for Collection	Must be delivered by close of polls on election day	Must be delivered within 3 days of receiving from voter OR by close of polls on election day (whichever is shorter)
Grace Period	✗ No - Must arrive by election day deadline	✓ Limited - Ballot won't be disqualified if returned late by designated person, as long as it's before polls close on election day



Comparing Illinois and California

Compensation Rules

Compensation	Illinois	California
Can Collectors Be Paid?	⚠ Not specifically addressed	✗ No - Cannot be paid based on number of ballots returned
Definition of Prohibited Compensation	Not defined	Includes money, goods, services, benefits, job promises, or any consideration based on ballot numbers
Professional Services	✅ Licensed motor carriers can be paid for delivery services	⚠ Unclear if professional services exempt



Comparing Illinois and California

Security and Fraud Prevention

Security Measures	Illinois	California
Penalties for Fraud	⚠️ General election fraud penalties apply	✅ Specific penalties in Division 18 (fraud, bribery, intimidation, tampering)
Ballot Tracking	❌ Not specifically required	✅ Required - Elections officials must provide online or phone tracking
Drop Box Security	✅ Locked boxes, only election officials can open	✅ Secure drop-off locations provided



Comparing Illinois and California

Return Methods

How Ballots Can Be Returned	Illinois	California
By Mail	✓ Yes	✓ Yes
In-Person by Voter	✓ Yes	✓ Yes
In-Person by Authorized Person	✓ Yes (with written authorization)	✓ Yes (with designation)
Drop Boxes	✓ Yes (election authority may provide)	✓ Yes (required to be provided)
At Polling Places	✓ Yes	✓ Yes (including vote centers)



Comparing Illinois and California

Special Provisions

Special Cases	Illinois	California
Voters with Disabilities	✓ Facility staff can collect for physically incapacitated voters	✓ Any designated person can help
Hospitalized Voters	✓ Hospital staff can collect and mail ballots	✓ Any designated person can help
Emergency Situations	⚠ Not specifically addressed	⚠ Not specifically addressed



Where do we stand?

IL House

IL Senate

118

59

Members

Members

Statistics

Voter Turnout Among Churchgoers in the 2024 Election

Overall Church Attendance

- **Self-identified Christians:** 72% of this group voted in the 2024 presidential election.
- **SAGE Cons (Spiritually Active Governance Engaged Conservative Christians):** 99% turnout, the highest among religious subgroups.

tell the story

Specific Denominations

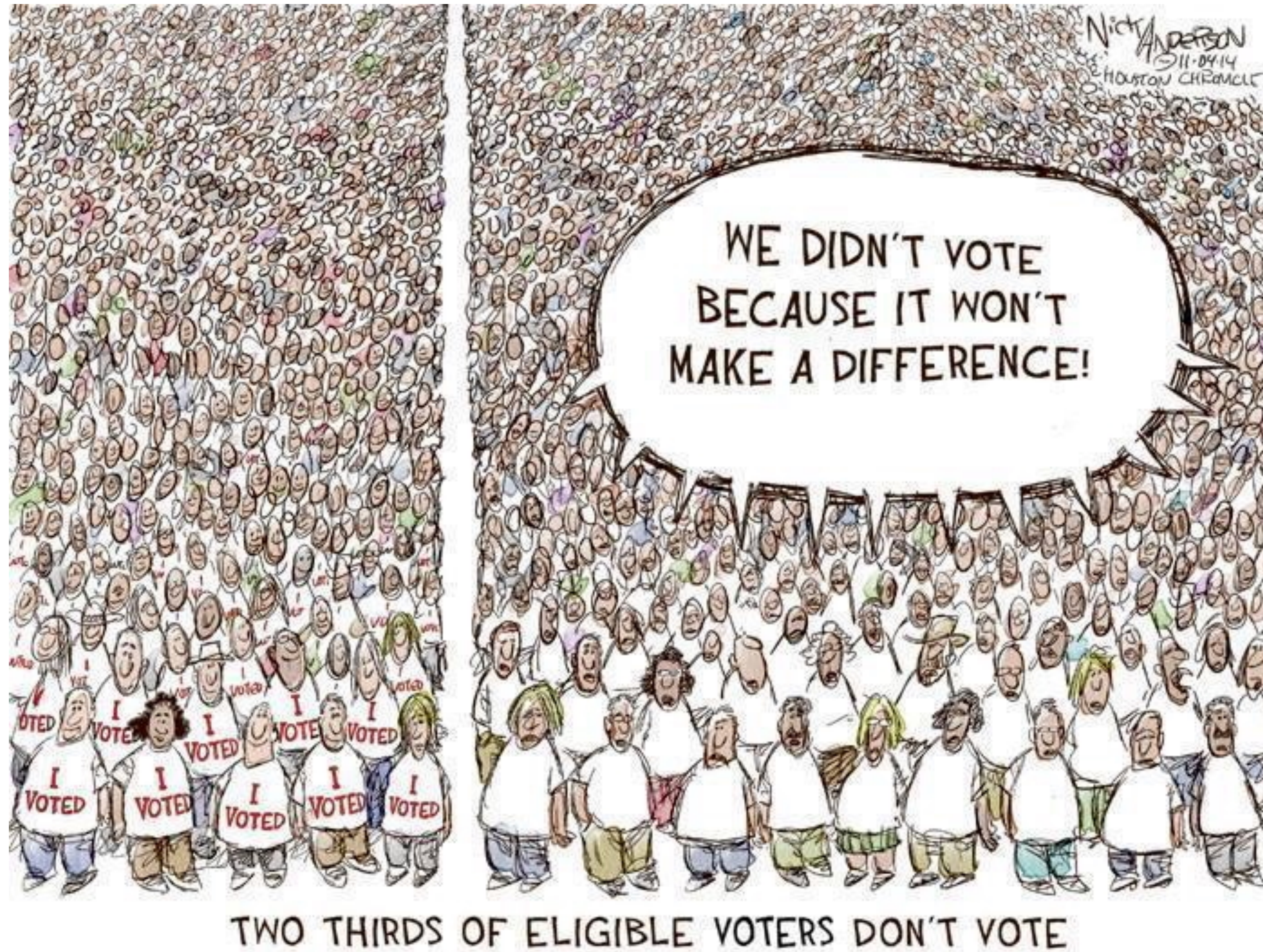
DENOMINATION	VOTER TURNOUT PERCENTAGE
Catholics	70% (up from 67% in 2020)
Biblical worldview holders	67% (up from 64% in 2020)
Pentecostal church attendees	62% (unchanged from 2020)
Mainline Protestant churches	65% (down from 66% in 2020)
Evangelical churches	59% (down from 65% in 2020)
General Protestant attendees	59% (down from 62% in 2020)

Summary

The turnout among churchgoers varied by denomination, with self-identified Christians showing significant participation, particularly among conservative groups.



My vote won't make a difference...



REALLY?!



Tied and one-vote-margin elections



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TRACKING ELECTIONS THAT ENDED IN TIES & CLOSE RESULTS

ONE ILLEGAL VOTE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Public Interest Legal Foundation's tied elections database gathers elections across the country that have ended in ties or been decided by one vote. These elections illustrate that one illegal vote or error can affect the outcome of an election.

This database is not an exhaustive or comprehensive list. There are many more tied and close elections out there.

1,352

Elections Ended in Ties

517

Elections Decided by One Vote



School Board success story

From the Calvary Chino Hills project

First efforts helped turn over school board seats

Gina Gleason: “Our local school district was run by progressives,” specifically referring to “Planned Parenthood-supported candidates”.

Gleason said the progressive candidate lost, expressing gratitude that Calvary Chapel Chino Hills member Sonja Shaw was elected president of the Chino Valley Unified School District Board of Education. “All of us working together made a difference in that election,” Gleason said, citing Shaw’s victory as an example of how “you can make a difference in your community.”



Turnout is critical

Don't allow Special Interest Groups to control your schools

Debbie Wuthnow, the president of iVoterGuide and vice president of AFA Action:

As school board elections have become increasingly important in American politics, Wuthnow lamented that just 6% of registered voters and 4% of eligible voters cast ballots in such contests. She warned that the low level of participation in school board elections means that small but influential interest groups such as "educational activists" and "trans activists" play an outsized role in determining the outcome.



National success story

From the Calvary Chino Hills project

In 2022 Election, Chino helped to turn over two U.S. Congress seats in California which helped to depose Nancy Pelosi – District 5 and District 13.



Encouraging the church body

Sometimes, it's as simple as asking!

Jason Yates, the CEO of the advocacy group My Faith Votes, cited survey data finding that most born-again Evangelical Christians reported that their churches did nothing to "help or encourage" them to vote as a reason why churches should take a more active role in promoting civic participation.

"While it is, I would say, a civic activity, I don't see it as a political activity. ... Ballot gathering is not ... an attempt to be partisan or to tell people how to vote," he contends. "It's encouraging them to vote and be involved in the process and having the church play an active role."



Our signature quote for the Illinois Election Integrity Program are words by George Jean Nathan:

***“Bad officials are elected
by good citizens who
DO NOT VOTE”!***



Administration support for churches...

...can make all the difference!

Harmeet Dhillon

Assistant Attorney General

Civil Rights Division

U.S. Department of Justice



Preparing your Ballot Collection project

Build a civic engagement team

- Your church might already have a Civic Engagement team
- This is the perfect home from which to launch your ballot collection project.
- Pastors - don't take this burden upon yourselves! You don't need more on your plate.
- You already know those in your church who are passionate about engaging with government issues.
- Recruit them to build the team, set parameters and oversight, build a chain of command from which that team can seek reviews & approvals



Ask your team to go beyond the basics

It should start with – but not stop with – Voter Registration

- Have a non-partisan voter registration table.
- Be sure to include IFI Voter Guides, AND party platform comparison guides (available for download on some of the resources websites I've listed on your Resources handout).
- Showing the comparison between political parties is OK, as long as you don't favor a particular party.



Ask your team to research how legislators work

Don't let your "Public Servants" (legislators) catch you off guard

- Legislative calendar - find out when most legislation (bills) are filed
- Find out the path a bill takes through your state House & Senate
- Which legislators are on which committees? Make a list by committee and include legislator contact info
- In Illinois, people can file Witness Slips online at:
<https://www.ilga.gov/>



Ask your team to monitor legislation

Action Alerts have an impact and keep your members engaged

- Have a team monitor legislation (IFI does a great job with this on family issues)
- There are additional organizations which specialize in monitoring education, taxes, healthcare issues, etc. Your team can sign up for those mailing lists.
- Your team can then share or create Action Alerts for your church members when legislation of concern is proposed.
- You might create an opt-in email list to reach those members interested in contacting legislators



Regular civic engagement creates “muscle memory”

Church members won't be intimidated or hesitant to take action

These year-round actions will keep your members engaged

When an election rolls around you have a solid base of committed people to help

You won't be scrambling to get people involved.

- Hold candidate forums
- Teach members how to order their VBM ballots
- This all builds into the Ballot collection project



Ballot Collection – Calvary Chino Hills Model

NOTE: ALL process and procedures must be confirmed with legal counsel familiar with Illinois election code.

As I mentioned earlier, if anyone knows of a church which has collected ballots in Illinois, I want to connect with them. We are in uncharted territory as far as I know.

The Networking the Networks leadership team can confirm that I've spent many months researching, consulting with election experts and attorneys to ensure I'm giving you the most reliable information. However, when you decide to move forward with ballot collecting, I will facilitate connecting you with appropriate legal counsel so you can proceed with confidence.



Ballot Collection – Calvary Chino Hills Model

Every church or ministry may be different – these are guidelines only

- Line up your volunteers, most from your civic engagement ministry
- Create your plans – Chain of Custody documentation should be included
- Announce to the church members where, when and how the ballot collection will take place. Use printed flyers, pulpit announcements, etc.
- Acquire all necessary supplies: lockboxes or bags, pens, glue sticks, etc.
- Train volunteer teams – 2 volunteers should be with the ballots at all times for security reasons
- You may want to collect on one Sunday only, or a few subsequent Sundays due to weeks of Early Voting in Illinois (40 days!)



Ballot Collection – Calvary Chino Hills Model

Every church or ministry may be different – these are guidelines only

- Set up tables in convenient location – leave enough space for people to move comfortably, or be seated if they need to complete their envelope
- Volunteers should be seated behind the table, with the lockboxes behind the volunteers. The boxes should never be left unattended
- Don't allow any ballots to be dropped off at the church on any other days or times other than designated ballot collection days and times.



Ballot Collection – Calvary Chino Hills Model

Every church or ministry may be different – these are guidelines only

- If your church members live in various Counties, set up separate tables with signs for each County. Ballots must be delivered to the Election Authority/County Clerk (EA/CC) in which the voter is registered to vote. (i.e. Cook, Lake, Kane, etc.)
- The voter should have already marked their ballot and sealed it in the Ballot Return Envelope which came with the ballot.
- Ballot privacy is important – it must come to you sealed in envelope
- The voter takes ballot to appropriate table for their County.



Ballot Collection – Calvary Chino Hills Model

Every church or ministry may be different – these are guidelines only

- Volunteers examine the Ballot Return Envelope to ensure it's filled out correctly
- The Affidavit of Ballot Delivery may look slightly different for each County (see next slide)
- The volunteer receiving the ballot must log it on a Ballot Collection Log Sheet (create a simple form - see upcoming slide #44)
- If all is good, the ballot is dropped into correct secure box by the volunteer
- **NOTE:** The church may want to consider taking photos as voters drop their ballots into secure containers, which is what Calvary Chapel chose to do



Ballot Collection – Calvary Chino Hills Model

Calvary asked voters to leave the lines for “Authorized Individual”, “Printed Name of Authorized Delivery Agent” & “Signature of Authorized Delivery Agent” **BLANK**, so the volunteer who actually delivered that ballot could complete prior to delivery.

Affidavit of Delivery

I _____, authorize _____
(Voter Voting by Mail) (Authorized Individual)

To take the necessary steps to have this ballot delivered promptly to the office of the election authority.

(Date)

(Signature of Voter)

(Printed name of Authorized Delivery Agent)

(Signature of Authorized Delivery Agent)

Ballot Collection – Calvary Chino Hills Model

What information should be on your Ballot Collection Log Sheet?

- Track whose ballot is being collected – voter name, address, voter ID
- Track the name of the volunteer accepting the ballot at collection
- Track date the ballot was collected
- Track place and date the ballot was delivered to EA/CC and name of the receiver
- Track the name and address of the volunteer delivering the ballot to EA/CC
- This Chain of Custody is very important



Ballot Collection – Calvary Chino Hills Model

Special reminders for volunteers

- Never ask what party voter is with or what candidates they're supporting.
- Take everyone's ballots, no questions asked.
- Volunteers should avoid partisan conversations.
- Churches are not official dropbox locations – places of worship should not identify themselves as such.
- Since the ballots are likely collected on Sunday & cannot be delivered the same day, secure lockboxes/bags should be put in a locked room in the church overnight.



Ballot Collection – Calvary Chino Hills Model

Once the ballots are collected...

- Volunteers who will be delivering the ballots should arrange to gather at the church Monday morning to take the secure containers, still secured, to deliver to the correct EA/CC.
- Two people should deliver the ballots to the EA/CC. The volunteers should also take photos or video to document the delivery.
- Do not take the ballots to a drop box – deliver them in person in the office and note the employee's name who received them from you.
- Volunteers can unlock the containers in the presence of the EA/CC when they deliver them.



Ballot Collection – Calvary Chino Hills Model

Once the ballots are collected...

If you recall from our earlier comparison of CA & IL, CA requires ballots to be delivered within 3 days of collecting them. Illinois only requires that ballot be delivered before the closing of polls on Election Day.

While Illinois has no compensation restrictions for those doing ballot collection, we recommend that volunteers not receive any compensation for ballot collection to avoid the appearance of impropriety.

WE DO NOT RECOMMEND HOLDING BALLOTS.



Ballot Collection – Calvary Chino Hills Model

Where do volunteers deliver the ballots?

- IL elections are administered locally by the state's 108 Election Authorities. These are the County Clerks in 101 counties, 1 county election commission and 6 municipal election commissions.
- The address of the proper EA/CC will be on the front of the Ballot Return Envelopes. If it is a post office box, see the State of IL Board of Elections website for EA locator:
<https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/ElectionAuthorities.aspx>



How to find the correct Election Authority

Home | Publications | Feedback

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Information For Voters	Campaign Disclosure	Voting Systems	Running for Office	Candidate Filing and Results	Business Registration	Press Room	Forms	About The Board
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Election Authorities

Elections are administered locally by the state's 108 election authorities. These are the county clerks in 101 counties, 1 county election commission and 6 municipal election commissions. These local authorities are a very important part of Illinois' election process. As part of their many responsibilities they handle local voter registration programs, train election judges, select polling places, get ballots printed, oversee Election Day activities, and supervise the vote count at the local level.

Select A Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction:



Be prepared for speed bumps

Could someone try to trip you up? This is Illinois – count on it!



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NEWS | NORTH COAST

Northern California church facing investigation for ballot collection effort

'I don't think this is legal,' the county's election official told SFGATE, after SFGATE inquired about the church's effort

By **Matt LaFever**, North Coast Contributing Editor

Nov 9, 2024



Be prepared for speed bumps

Church completely cleared!



Home / News



Church cleared of wrongdoing after media outlet prompts review of ballot-collection campaign

Ministry director warns of 'attempt to silence' voters with 'biblical worldview'

By Ian M. Giatti, Christian Post Reporter | Monday, December 02, 2024



Gina Gleason, director of the Real Impact ministry of Calvary Chapel Chino Hills in California, shares a message about ballot collection in a breakout session at the Pray Vote Stand Summit in Washington D.C. on Sept. 16, 2023 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. | The Christian Post/Nicole Alcindor

Consider local partners

Reach out to area churches to find like-minded partners and network with them.

- Strength in numbers
- Partners in seeking legal support

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.” – **Ecclesiastes 4:9-10**

“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” – **Proverbs 27:17**



Resources to build civic engagement ministry



MYFAITHVOTES[®]

United. We Stand.

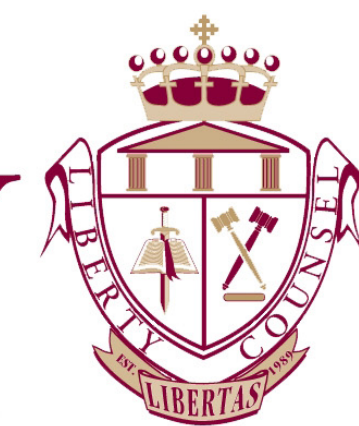


Legal Resources

ADVOCATES
FOR FAITH & FREEDOM

 ALLIANCE DEFENDING
FREEDOM

 PACIFIC JUSTICE
INSTITUTE

LIBERTY  COUNSEL

FIRST  LIBERTY



How to reach us

Illinois Conservative Union

Illinois Election Integrity Program

Sign up to volunteer on our website:

www.ieip.org

OR

Scan the QR code here —————>

