



# The big debate

## Should Election Day be a national holiday?

Voting is an important part of American society. Does it deserve a whole day off?

### What you need to know

- An 1845 law made all US national elections on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November.
- Election Day is a holiday in 19 states, including Delaware, Hawaii, Kentucky, New York, and Virginia.
- Making it a federal holiday would mean many schools, banks, and other businesses would close for the day and still pay most workers.
- A 2018 survey found that 65% of Americans were in favor of making Election Day a national holiday.



Every two years, Americans go to the polls on Election Day to vote for members of the US Congress. Every four years, they also vote for the next President. Compared to other countries, US voter turnout is low. Only about 67% of eligible people voted in 2020, for example, and 53% in 2018. Although mail-in and early voting are available in some places, voting in many towns requires going to a school or library—which is difficult for some people because of work or other commitments. To solve that, some lawmakers want to make the day a federal holiday. Others say there are better solutions. What do you think? Should Election Day be a national holiday?

### Yes—it would improve our democracy

In four recent US elections, schedules were the top reason registered voters said they did not vote. Many working Americans can't get to the polls, wait in long lines, and cast their votes before or after work or during a lunch break. Making Election Day a federal holiday would make it easier for everyone to exercise their right to vote. That would increase overall voter turnout. In nations that have made the day a holiday, such as South Korea and Australia, participation is much higher. Making Election Day a holiday would also send a message about the importance of voting and serve as a reminder that it's a civic responsibility.

### No—it's a hassle that doesn't really help

Creating a new holiday would force schools and businesses to adjust their schedules. It would affect mail delivery, banking, and other services. And, as on other federal holidays, many essential workers at hospitals, grocery stores, and other places that remain open would still have to go to their jobs and, if they have kids, find childcare because schools are closed. It wouldn't be any easier for those workers to vote. Plus, lines at polling places could be even longer as more people vote on the same day. There are other ways to increase voter turnout, such as expanding early and mail-in voting, that would be better for the nation.

### YES Three reasons why Election Day should be a national holiday

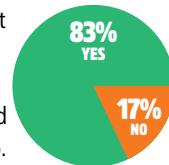
- 1 Many people can't get to the polls on a Tuesday. A holiday would make it easier for them to exercise their right to vote.
- 2 If more people could get to the polls, the low US voter turnout would improve.
- 3 Creating a federal holiday would send a message to Americans that voting is an important civic responsibility.

### NO Three reasons why Election Day should not be a national holiday

- 1 Holiday closures would create scheduling issues for schools and businesses and inconvenience many people.
- 2 Many essential workers wouldn't be able to take the day off, which means they could still be left out of voting.
- 3 Polling places would be even more packed on Election Day than they are now.

### LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked if school lunch periods are too short. Your answers were a real lesson about lunchtime: 83% of you said yes, and 17% said no.



### What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, have a parent or guardian visit [theweekjunior.com/polls](http://theweekjunior.com/polls) with you so you can vote in our debate. Vote **YES** if you think Election Day should be a national holiday or **NO** if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.