

# UNDERSTANDING WHY FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS MATTER

Elections are the foundation of democracy. They are how citizens choose their leaders, shape the direction of their communities, and ensure that power remains accountable to the people. Without elections that are free, fair, and trusted, democracy itself cannot endure.

The 2020 election revealed just how fragile this trust can be. Lies and conspiracies about the outcome spread widely, even after courts and independent officials confirmed the results. That deliberate disinformation campaign eroded confidence in the process and fueled an unprecedented attack on the United States Capitol. When false claims are allowed to undermine faith in elections, the danger is not only confusion—it is the unraveling of democracy itself.

Free and fair elections require more than ballots cast and counted. They depend on rules that give every eligible citizen equal access to the vote. They require safeguards that ensure results are accurate, transparent, and secure. They demand conditions where voters can participate free from intimidation, where conspiracies and disinformation are met with facts, and where election officials can do their jobs without harassment or threats.

Protecting elections strengthens democracy in tangible ways. It builds trust that outcomes reflect the will of the people, even when the results are disappointing for some. It guarantees peaceful and legitimate transfers of power, avoiding the chaos that comes when authority is seized by force instead of earned through votes.

The health of democracy is measured not only by who wins elections but by how those elections are conducted. Free and fair elections ensure that power remains in the hands of the people, not concentrated in the hands of a few. They are the cornerstone of a system where leaders are chosen by citizens and held accountable every day they hold office.

