Opinion
Guest Voices



Voters stand in line outside a polling place at Madison Church, Nov. 5, 2024, in Phoenix. (AP Photo/Matt York)



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Too many Americans today fear that their votes do not count because they believe that elections can be stolen. That means churches need to help protect the electoral process and restore our faith in democracy.

Only 34% of U.S. adults said they trusted government certifications of election results "a great deal" or "quite a bit," according to a survey conducted this summer by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and USAFacts. That number is down slightly from 40% in 2024.

Many Republicans fear that people who are not citizens will vote, although studies haven’t found significant numbers of noncitizens voting. Some Democrats fear that Trump will send federal agents or the military to seize ballots, although this would be against the law. Both sides fear that those counting the ballots will cheat.

Nothing is more destructive of democracy than losing faith in the electoral process. When faith in elections is destroyed, people are more likely to turn to violence — just look at Jan. 6, 2021.

In order to restore faith in democracy, churches need to step up to guarantee the fairness of the electoral process.

Churches are trusted local institutions in every corner of America. Many, in fact, are used as polling places because they have halls, parking and other amenities that

make voting easier. Their locations are well known, and unlike public schools, another popular option, they are not busy on weekdays.

Americans United estimated that about 20% of polling places in 2020 were at churches.

But the greatest resource of churches is people who are willing to volunteer. These are trusted locals, not outsiders. Churchgoers, although they may have partisan views, also know that lying, stealing and cheating are sins. While partisanship may be strong, their religious convictions should tell them there are limits to partisanship.

Churches need to encourage their members to volunteer as poll workers and poll watchers in this year's midterm election. These trusted members of the community can safeguard the integrity of the election and give credible testimony to the community that the election was fair.

There is a great need for volunteers on election day. Over 770,000 individuals served as poll workers for the 2024 general election, many of them volunteers.

Since churches don't offer expertise on elections, they need to partner with long-standing groups like the League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan grassroots organization working to protect and expand voting rights. There are local leagues all over the country to whom churches could direct their members.

Signing up as a poll worker is very easy, just go to powerthepolls.org/lwv. It took me less than 10 minutes to sign up. You must be available on Election Day and be willing to attend a training session beforehand. Requirements vary by state.

Churches should encourage their members to be poll workers. It is both a civic and religious obligation to protect the electoral process and our democracy.

Churches should also encourage employers to allow their workers the day off to volunteer as poll workers. And since many workers cannot afford to take Election Day off, it is especially important for retired people to step forward.

Tuesday, Nov. 3, is going to be an important day in the history of our country. We as people of faith need to help make it peaceful, fair and credible.

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