



Knowledge of State Voter ID Laws

October 22, 2026

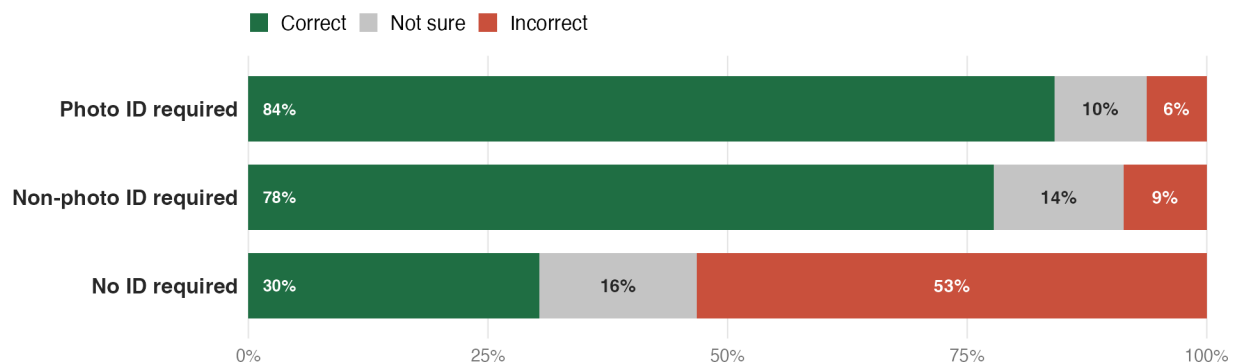
A survey of 44,633 U.S. adults, fielded from August 23 to October 12, 2026, finds that two thirds (68%) of people likely to vote in person, either early or on election day can accurately say whether their state requires them to present identification when voting. 20% of likely in-person voters answered incorrectly, and 12% were unsure. However, confusion exists in states that do not require ID to vote, where a majority of all likely voters incorrectly believe they will need an ID to vote this November.

By state policy

Voter ID knowledge strongly varies by state and state policy. There are three main policy groups states fall under: 24 states require voters to present photo identification, 12 states allow voters to present either photo or non-photo forms of identification, and 14 states and the District of Columbia do not require voters to present identification (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2026). 83% of respondents in photo ID states and 78% of respondents in non-photo ID states were able to correctly say their state requires voter identification. However, among states that do not require an ID to vote, only 31% of voters answered correctly, 16% were unsure, and 53% wrongly believed their state requires an ID to vote.

Do voters know their state's voter ID rules?

% of likely in-person voters, by state ID policy



Source: CHIP50 survey of 44,633 U.S. adults, Aug 31–Oct 12, 2026. Estimates are weighted to reflect the U.S. adult population, including within each state. Results among 30,998 likely in-person voters (voting early in person, on Election Day, or undecided); margin of error ± 0.7 pts. Correct = right about whether their state requires ID to vote in person (state rules per National Conference of State Legislatures, Sept 2026).

By state

The Shorenstein Center 2026 Voting Information Trends Reports are produced by the Shorenstein Center in collaboration with the National Internet Observatory at Northeastern University, the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard Kennedy School, and The Civic Health and Institutions Project.

Within each ID policy type, several states stand out, reflecting recent events and policy changes (Appendix Figure A1). Among photo ID states, accuracy is the lowest in West Virginia (75% correct) and North Carolina (74% correct). West Virginia moved from a non-photo to a photo ID requirement in 2025 (W. Va. Code § 3-1-34, 2025; West Virginia Legislature, 2025). In North Carolina, voters approved a photo ID amendment in 2018 (N.C. Const. art. VI, §§ 2(4), 3(2); North Carolina State Board of Elections 2018), but courts blocked it until the state Supreme Court reversed itself in 2023 (Holmes v. Moore, 2023). Among non-photo ID and no ID states, accuracy tends to be lower where greater proportions of the population vote by mail. Washington (59% correct; 23% will vote in-person), Colorado (63%; 33%), Utah 65%; 36%), Hawaii (9%; 36%), Oregon (26%; 20%), and California 27%; 20%) all have relatively lower accuracy compared to other states with the same policy, but the percent of likely voters saying they will vote in person is also low. At the other end, Maine has the highest accuracy among no-ID states (44% correct). In November 2025, Maine voters rejected a ballot question that would have required photo ID (Maine Secretary of State, 2025), so it may be more salient for voters there.

By demographics

Across demographics, knowledge of voter ID laws is associated with older age, and higher levels of income (Appendix Figure A2). These disparities are the largest for people in states where ID is not required. Black and Hispanic voters are more likely to wrongly believe an ID is required in no ID states (17% and 21% correct among Blacks and Hispanics, respectively, compared to 35% of whites). Republicans tend to be more accurate across all policy types. There are less pronounced or consistent differences by gender or between urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Change over time

Across our six-week data collection period, where each respondent answers once over the entire period, there are no significant changes in accuracy (Appendix Figure A3). Voters do not appear to become more accurately informed as the election draws nearer. Our topline and demographic comparisons are largely consistent with findings from Pew Research a decade earlier (Jones, 2016).

By media consumption and information exposure

Controlling for demographic differences with a logistic regression we find following election news predicts greater accuracy for likely in-person voters in photo ID and no ID states (2.1 and 5.1 percentage point increases, respectively, for every point on a 4-point scale). Not seeing any voting information is associated with a 9.6 percentage point decrease in accuracy in no ID states, but there is no significant difference in states requiring ID.

Among individuals who report seeing voting related information, receiving the information through TV news is associated with greater accuracy in photo ID states (2.3 percentage point increase), but lower accuracy in no ID states (3.5 percentage point decrease). Seeing voting

information specifically about voter identification also has a similar diverging effect, where those seeing voter ID information have greater accuracy in photo ID states (4 percentage point increase), but lower accuracy in no ID states (9.8 percentage point decrease). This may reflect a possible phenomenon where the information people see about voter ID information tends to focus on restrictive states, rather than the state an individual resides in, resulting in people thinking voter ID laws are more restrictive in general. However, additional research is needed to confirm this.

Receiving information provided by election officials is associated with accuracy in photo ID and non-photo ID states (3 and 5.5 percentage increases, respectively) but has no significant association with accuracy in no ID states. A potential reason may be that election officials in no ID states are not communicating information specifically about voter ID requirements.

Methodology

From August 31 to October 12, 2026 we collected responses from 44,663 U.S. adults (18+) across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The surveys were conducted by PureSpectrum through an online, nonprobability sample. We reweighted our data using demographic characteristics to match the U.S. population within each respondent's state with respect to 2024 vote choice and turnout, race and ethnicity, age, gender, education, and living in urban, suburban, or rural areas within each state. Weekly trends are weighted within the week, but not by state. Margins of error listed in the caption of figures indicate statistical significance at the 95% confidence level. More information on methodology is available at chip50.org/survey-methodology.

References

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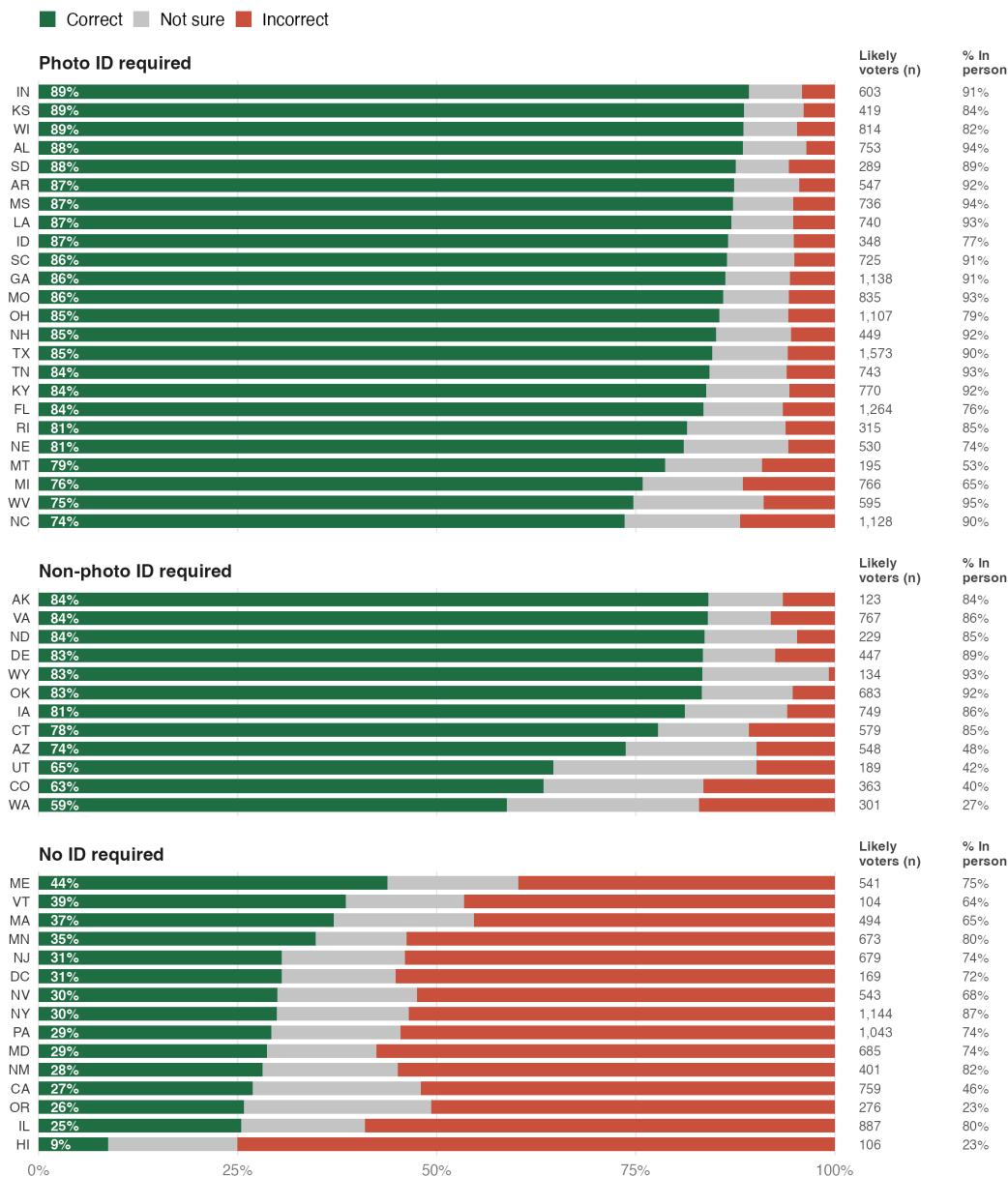
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Appendix

Figure A1

Knowledge of state voter ID rules, by state

% of likely in-person voters, by state (sorted by % correct within each ID policy)



Source: CHIP50 survey of 44,633 U.S. adults, Aug 31–Oct 12, 2026. Estimates are weighted to reflect the U.S. adult population, including within each state. Results among 30,998 likely in-person voters (voting early in person, on Election Day, or undecided). Margins of error (95% confidence) for % correct range from ± 2.3 to ± 11.2 pts across groups. Correct = right about whether their state requires ID to vote in person (state rules per National Conference of State Legislatures, Sept 2026). Likely voters (n) = number of likely in-person voters in the state (the base for each bar). % In person = share planning to vote early in person or on Election Day, among respondents planning to vote by mail, early in person, or on Election Day, or who haven't decided.

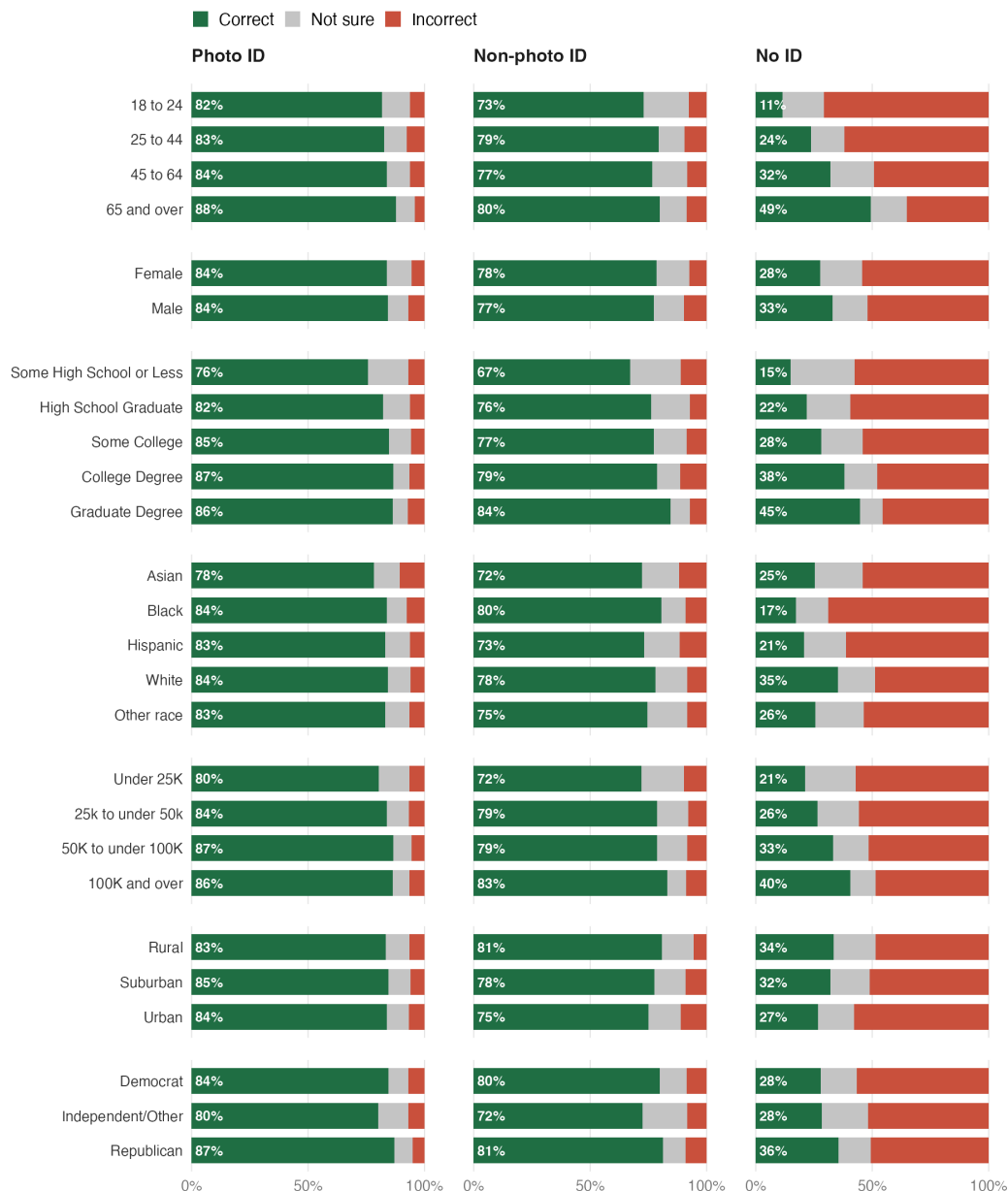
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Figure A2

Knowledge of state voter ID rules, by demographic group

% of likely in-person voters, by demographic group and state ID policy



Source: CHIP50 survey of 44,633 U.S. adults, Aug 31–Oct 12, 2026. Estimates are weighted to reflect the U.S. adult population, including within each state. Results among 30,998 likely in-person voters (voting early in person, on Election Day, or undecided). Margins of error (95% confidence) for % correct range from ± 0.7 to ± 9.5 pts across groups. Correct = right about whether their state requires ID to vote in person (state rules per National Conference of State Legislatures, Sept 2026). Race is select-all.

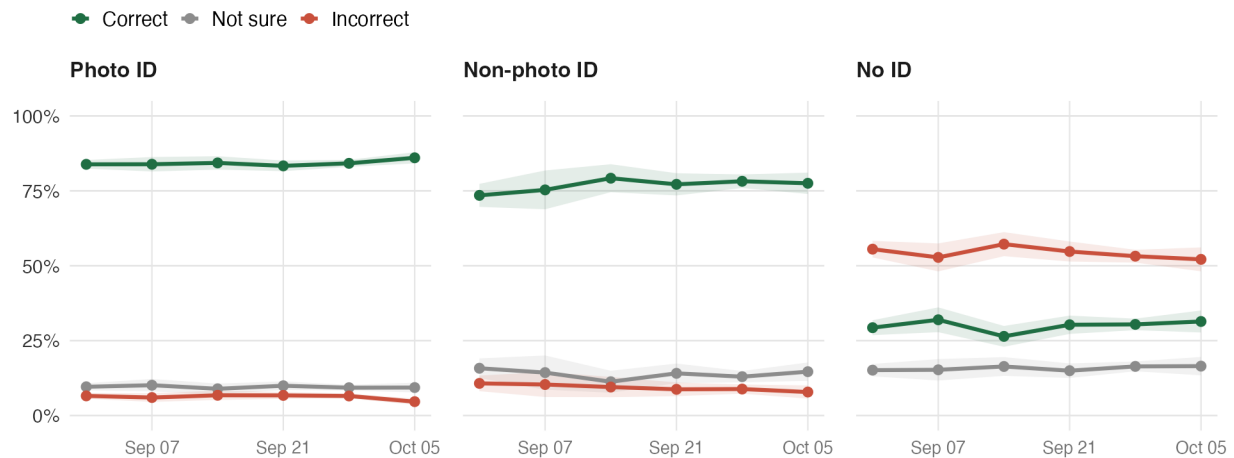
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Figure A3

Knowledge of state voter ID rules, by week

% of likely in-person voters, by survey start week and state ID policy



Source: CHIP50 survey of 44,633 U.S. adults, Aug 31–Oct 12, 2026. Each week is weighted separately to reflect the U.S. adult population. Results among 30,998 likely in-person voters (voting early in person, on Election Day, or undecided). Shaded bands = 95% confidence intervals for each weekly estimate. Correct = right about whether their state requires ID to vote in person (state rules per National Conference of State Legislatures, Sept 2026).

Table A1. Voting information sources and knowledge of state voter ID rules

Survey-weighted logistic regression of answering correctly whether one's state requires ID to vote in person, by state ID policy

Information measure	Photo ID required (n = 17,201)		Photo or non-photo ID required (n = 5,024)		No ID required (n = 8,340)	
	Change, pts (95% CI)	Odds ratio (95% CI)	Change, pts (95% CI)	Odds ratio (95% CI)	Change, pts (95% CI)	Odds ratio (95% CI)
<i>Attention to election news and voting information</i>						
Follows election news closely (4-point scale)	+2.1*** (+1.3, +2.9)	1.19*** (1.11, 1.27)	+0.5 (-1.4, +2.2)	1.03 (0.92, 1.15)	+5.1*** (+3.5, +6.7)	1.31*** (1.20, 1.42)
Saw voting info more recently (6-point scale)	+0.1 (-0.7, +0.9)	1.01 (0.95, 1.07)	+0.1 (-1.6, +1.8)	1.01 (0.91, 1.11)	-0.3 (-1.4, +1.0)	0.98 (0.92, 1.05)
Saw no voting information	+0.5 (-3.0, +3.3)	1.04 (0.79, 1.36)	+3.5 (-4.2, +10.1)	1.24 (0.79, 1.96)	-9.6*** (-14.2, -3.7)	0.58*** (0.42, 0.79)
<i>Where they saw voting information</i>						
TV news	+2.3** (+0.6, +4.0)	1.19** (1.05, 1.36)	+2.3 (-1.1, +5.3)	1.15 (0.94, 1.42)	-3.5** (-5.8, -0.8)	0.82** (0.71, 0.95)
Radio	+2.2 (-0.5, +4.6)	1.20 (0.96, 1.49)	+3.0 (-1.8, +7.5)	1.21 (0.89, 1.66)	+0.1 (-3.6, +4.5)	1.00 (0.82, 1.24)
Newspaper	-4.8** (-8.4, -1.4)	0.71** (0.57, 0.90)	+1.9 (-4.1, +7.2)	1.12 (0.78, 1.62)	-4.8* (-8.0, -0.8)	0.76* (0.61, 0.94)
News website	+0.8 (-1.3, +2.7)	1.07 (0.91, 1.25)	-4.0 (-8.6, -0.1)	0.79 (0.62, 1.00)	-0.5 (-3.4, +2.7)	0.97 (0.82, 1.15)
Social media	+0.3 (-1.6, +1.8)	1.02 (0.89, 1.17)	-0.7 (-4.2, +2.8)	0.96 (0.79, 1.17)	-1.1 (-3.6, +1.6)	0.94 (0.81, 1.10)
Podcast	-1.1 (-4.6, +2.0)	0.92 (0.73, 1.16)	-3.6 (-9.5, +1.9)	0.81 (0.59, 1.12)	+2.7 (-1.7, +6.8)	1.16 (0.91, 1.47)
Regular mail	-0.7 (-3.1, +1.7)	0.95 (0.79, 1.15)	+2.2 (-2.2, +6.5)	1.15 (0.87, 1.51)	+3.0 (-0.3, +6.5)	1.18 (0.98, 1.41)
Email	-1.7 (-5.0, +1.1)	0.88 (0.70, 1.11)	+4.5 (-0.6, +9.0)	1.34 (0.93, 1.94)	-0.9 (-5.4, +3.7)	0.95 (0.73, 1.23)
Conversations with others	+1.5 (-0.6, +3.6)	1.13 (0.95, 1.34)	+0.8 (-3.6, +4.7)	1.05 (0.81, 1.36)	+0.3 (-2.6, +3.7)	1.02 (0.85, 1.22)
AI chatbot	-1.1 (-7.2, +3.7)	0.92 (0.62, 1.37)	+4.3 (-6.7, +11.9)	1.32 (0.69, 2.52)	-3.1 (-10.5, +4.0)	0.84 (0.54, 1.32)
Other channel	-1.4 (-6.6, +2.9)	0.90 (0.64, 1.28)	-3.6 (-13.7, +4.6)	0.81 (0.48, 1.38)	+1.9 (-4.6, +8.6)	1.11 (0.77, 1.60)
<i>Who the voting information came from</i>						
Election officials	+3.0** (+0.8, +4.8)	1.28** (1.07, 1.53)	+5.5* (+1.1, +8.9)	1.43* (1.08, 1.89)	-0.9 (-3.7, +2.2)	0.95 (0.80, 1.14)
Campaign or party	+1.0 (-1.3, +3.1)	1.08 (0.91, 1.28)	+3.6 (-0.6, +7.5)	1.25 (0.96, 1.63)	-1.0 (-4.1, +2.3)	0.95 (0.80, 1.13)
Journalists	-0.7 (-3.1, +1.3)	0.95 (0.81, 1.11)	+1.6 (-2.7, +5.2)	1.10 (0.87, 1.40)	+2.6 (-0.4, +5.8)	1.15 (0.98, 1.36)
Media personality	+0.4 (-1.7, +2.2)	1.03 (0.88, 1.20)	+1.6 (-2.4, +5.0)	1.10 (0.87, 1.40)	-4.2** (-7.1, -1.2)	0.79** (0.67, 0.94)
Influencers	+0.1 (-2.6, +2.7)	1.01 (0.83, 1.23)	+2.1 (-3.3, +7.3)	1.14 (0.82, 1.59)	-2.6 (-6.5, +1.7)	0.86 (0.68, 1.10)
Friends or family	-0.8 (-3.1, +1.4)	0.94 (0.80, 1.10)	+1.1 (-3.1, +4.7)	1.07 (0.83, 1.38)	-5.7*** (-8.9, -2.6)	0.73*** (0.61, 0.87)
Co-workers	-2.9 (-7.1, +0.1)	0.81 (0.63, 1.04)	+4.5 (-2.7, +10.0)	1.34 (0.86, 2.08)	-1.7 (-7.1, +3.8)	0.91 (0.67, 1.24)
Other source	+0.6 (-3.0, +3.8)	1.05 (0.79, 1.40)	-1.6 (-9.2, +5.0)	0.91 (0.58, 1.42)	+0.2 (-5.4, +5.7)	1.01 (0.76, 1.35)
<i>What the voting information was about</i>						
Voter ID requirements	+4.0*** (+2.5, +5.6)	1.39*** (1.21, 1.59)	-0.4 (-3.9, +2.7)	0.97 (0.79, 1.20)	-9.8*** (-12.5, -7.1)	0.57*** (0.49, 0.67)
Registration deadlines or status	+1.1 (-0.5, +2.9)	1.09 (0.95, 1.27)	+3.8* (+0.5, +7.2)	1.27* (1.02, 1.59)	-0.3 (-2.9, +2.5)	0.99 (0.85, 1.15)
Polling place or hours	+1.6 (-0.3, +3.2)	1.13 (0.98, 1.30)	+2.6 (-0.9, +5.9)	1.18 (0.95, 1.46)	+0.6 (-2.1, +3.4)	1.03 (0.89, 1.20)
Mail or absentee voting rules	-0.7 (-2.4, +1.1)	0.95 (0.82, 1.09)	-0.1 (-3.2, +3.1)	1.00 (0.80, 1.24)	+4.9*** (+2.3, +7.7)	1.30*** (1.13, 1.50)
Campaign ads about voting	+0.9 (-1.2, +2.7)	1.07 (0.93, 1.23)	+4.1* (+0.9, +7.3)	1.29* (1.04, 1.60)	-2.0 (-4.6, +0.8)	0.89 (0.77, 1.04)
Other topic	+4.6* (+0.9, +7.5)	1.50* (1.08, 2.07)	+2.0 (-6.0, +8.5)	1.13 (0.72, 1.77)	+3.7 (-2.0, +9.9)	1.22 (0.90, 1.65)

Note. Change, pts = estimated change, in percentage points, in the chance of answering correctly for respondents who reported that source (or a one-step increase on a scale), compared with otherwise similar respondents who did not. Odds ratios above 1 indicate higher odds of answering correctly; below 1, lower odds. Statistically significant estimates are in bold; * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001. Models are run separately for each state ID policy group, include all information measures shown together, and control for age, gender, education, race/ethnicity, income, party, and community type. Respondents could select more than one channel, source, and topic. Estimates show associations, not causal effects. Sample: likely in-person voters (planning to vote early in person or on Election Day, or undecided). State ID policy groups follow the National Conference of State Legislatures (Sept. 2026). Source: CHIP50 survey, 2026.