**Are American Elections Secure and Fair?**

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The integrity of American elections is a topic of ongoing discussion in both academic and partisan circles. The honesty and reliability of elections are a basic requirement for democracy and a key factor in public trust of democracy. Election security refers to effective measures in place to detect and prevent fraud, tampering and cyberattacks, ensuring that every

legitimate vote is counted accurately and no illegitimate votes are included.

Election fairness, on the other hand, delves into whether all eligible citizens have an equal opportunity to cast their ballot and whether the electoral system itself provides an equitable playing field for candidates and parties. While the American electoral system has robust

safeguards, it also faces persistent challenges and criticisms, leading to a

complex answer to the question of whether its elections are truly secure and

fair.

There is strong evidence that voter fraud and vote tampering are very rare in the American political system and do not affect outcomes. From a security standpoint, the decentralized nature of American elections is often cited as a primary strength. Elections are administered by thousands of local jurisdictions, not a single national entity. This fragmentation makes it incredibly difficult for a single actor or group to compromise results on a widespread scale. Furthermore, a multi-layered approach to security is employed. Voting machines, whether

optical scan or direct-recording electronic (DRE) systems, undergo rigorous certification processes. Most are not directly connected to the Internet by design to make cyber intervention difficult or impossible.

Many states now require paper trails for DRE machines, allowing for audits and recounts that verify electronic tallies against physical ballots. Post-election audits, including risk-limiting audits, are also increasingly common, providing a statistical method to ensure accuracy by

comparing paper ballots to machine counts. Cybersecurity measures are also robust

and continually enhanced, with federal agencies like the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) working with state and local election officials to protect systems from foreign and domestic threats.

However, the question of fairness introduces a broader set of considerations. Voter access is a critical component of fairness. Laws surrounding voter registration, identification requirements, early voting and absentee voting vary significantly by state, leading to disparities in ease of

access. While some argue that strict voter ID laws are necessary to prevent fraud, others contend they disproportionately disenfranchise eligible voters, particularly minorities, the elderly, and low-income individuals who may lack the required identification or a convenient means to get it.

Similarly, issues like gerrymandering—the drawing of electoral district boundaries to favor one party over another—can undermine the principle of "one person, one vote" by creating safe seats and diluting the power of certain voter blocs. Campaign finance laws also play a significant role, as the influence of large donations and super PACs raises concerns about whether all candidates have a fair chance to compete regardless of their financial backing.

Historically, the fight for election fairness in the United States has been a long and arduous one, marked by struggles for voting rights for African Americans, women and young people. While significant progress has been made since the Civil Rights era, debates about voter suppression tactics, the impact of felony disenfranchisement laws and challenges faced by Native American and some big-city communities in accessing polling places continue. These historical and ongoing issues highlight that fairness is not merely about preventing fraud on election day but about ensuring equitable participation and representation throughout the entire electoral process.

American elections operate in a shifting environment because of technological advances and partisan concerns. Perfecting them is an ongoing struggle, requiring constant adaptation to new technologies, societal shifts and the race for partisan advantage. While significant voter fraud is not present because of the efforts to combat it. concerns about the fairness of and access to American elections persist and may be well-founded.

The American electoral system is undeniably complex, reflecting the nation's federal structure, the impact of the constitution, the diverse political landscape and what the courts have done with the Voting Rights Act and subsequent legislation. Ultimately, the perception of security and fairness is deeply intertwined with public trust, which is built not only on strong safeguards but

also on transparency, accessibility and a commitment to addressing the systemic issues that can impede truly equitable participation. For American democracy to thrive, continuous vigilance and reform are essential to ensure that every eligible voice can be heard, and every legitimate vote counted.