

How a vote becomes a result.

VERIFIED BY PROCESS — NOT BY ASSERTION

A U.S. election isn't one machine you must trust — it's a **chain of overlapping safeguards** run across ~10,000 locally administered, bipartisan-staffed jurisdictions that each check the others. Decentralization is itself a safeguard: a nationwide fix would require silently coordinating thousands of independent offices and still surviving an audit. Learn the chain, then check any claim yourself.

THE CHAIN OF SAFEGUARDS / EACH BACKS UP THE OTHERS

Paper record. Most votes leave paper the voter can verify; software is re-checked against it.

► catches software error, tampering, "flipped votes"

Logic & accuracy testing. Public pre-election tests run known ballots through machines to confirm exact totals.

► catches rigged or miscalibrated tabulators

Bipartisan staff & observers. Opposing parties + credentialed observers watch the same rooms.

► catches local insider manipulation

Eligibility & signature checks. ID, signature matching, registration checks — rules vary by state.

► catches ineligible or impersonated voting

Chain of custody. Tamper-evident seals + signed logs track every ballot and handler.

► catches tampering, substitution, "suitcase" claims

Canvass & reconciliation. Ballots counted must square with voters checked in, precinct by precinct.

► catches stuffed/missing ballots, counting errors

Post-election audits (RLAs). Hand-check a statistical sample of paper vs. machine totals; expand if in doubt.

► catches undetected error/fraud affecting the outcome

Certification & challenges. Public certification; recounts and court challenges test evidence on both sides.

► forces disputes and evidence into the open

CHECK A CLAIM LIKE AN AUDITOR

- 1

Find the primary record.
Not the screenshot — the official source.
- 2

Name the step.
Which real part of the process does the claim describe?
- 3

Check the base rate.
Is this normal? (Batches report at different times, etc.)
- 4

Find the safeguard.
Which of the checks at left would catch it if it were real?
- 5

See if it's settled.
Has it already been examined or ruled on? Apply it to every side equally.

YOUR ROLE

Verify your registration at your official state office.

Work the polls — see the safeguards firsthand.

Observe legally; learn the rules, watch the chain work.

Report the right way — to officials, where evidence can act.

Slow the share — run the 5 steps before forwarding.

FIND YOUR ELECTION OFFICE (OFFICIAL .GOV)

vote.gov — register / check status

usa.gov/state-election-office — your local office

eac.gov — U.S. Election Assistance Commission

CLAIM CHEAT-SHEET / MOST VIRAL CLAIMS ARE AN ORDINARY FEATURE OF THE PROCESS, MISREAD

WHAT YOU HEAR	MOST LIKELY WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON
"Totals jumped overnight for one candidate."	Batch reporting. Large blocks of legal ballots are counted and posted at once — the jump is when counting finished.
"More ballots than registered voters."	Mismatched data. Stale or wrong-area registration numbers. Reconciliation checks ballots against actual check-ins.
"The machines flipped votes."	Checkable on paper. L&A testing + the paper record + audits exist precisely to catch this.
"Ballots pulled from a hidden suitcase/box."	Sealed storage. Normal custody. Ask for the log; those ballots are already in the reconciled total.
"The count was suspiciously paused."	Reporting schedule. A pause in reporting isn't a pause in security — sealed ballots don't change overnight.
"Observers were blocked."	A real process concern worth pressing on its facts — but distance from a table isn't proof the count was wrong.
"Large numbers of non-citizens voted."	Illegal & rare. Attestation + cross-checks; big lists shrink on inspection. How to verify is a fair policy debate.
"Mail ballots are inherently fraudulent."	A method with safeguards — signature match, tracking barcodes, reconciliation. Rare and caught ≠ impossible; the tradeoffs are the real debate.



SCAN: FULL GUIDE

Trust is earned by verification — not demanded by assertion.