

2024

VOTER MISINFORMATION GUIDE



OFFICE OF THE ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL

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A Message from Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul

The right to vote is one of the most fundamental rights we have as Americans, and voters deserve to have accurate information about the important choices they make on their ballots.



Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology can create fake but realistic photos, videos and audio. There are constructive uses for AI, but it is also a powerful tool for bad actors to create confusion and sow mistrust. In addition, scammers have long used campaign season as an opportunity to steal personal information and commit financial fraud.

AI-generated election misinformation is deployed through social media platforms, robocalls, text messages and chatbots that can spread false information to millions of people very quickly. AI-generated pictures falsely depicting celebrities endorsing or condemning a particular political candidate or cause are shared widely across social media.

Fake, AI-generated audio of political candidates has been used in attempts to deter voters in previous elections.

While anyone can fall victim to election misinformation, minority voters have been disproportionately targeted in recent national elections. A U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee report found that Russian interference efforts in the 2016 election targeted Black Americans more than any other group. The report also found that Russian operatives had created Facebook groups targeting Muslims, Latinos, Immigrants and LGBTQ individuals.

The good news is that Americans are becoming more critical consumers when it comes to AI-generated information. A recent Associated Press poll found that about two-thirds of Americans are skeptical of election information generated by chatbots or search engines that use AI.

While election misinformation efforts are concerning, we can be reassured by the fact that thousands of election officials and volunteers work hard and with integrity to keep our elections free and fair. Their dedication to democracy should be commended, and Americans can have faith in our electoral process. The best thing you can do to combat misinformation is to educate yourself on your ballot choices and make your plan to vote by using reliable sources. My office is providing this guide to assist you, so that you can confidently exercise your right to vote.

As the general election draws nearer, I'm reminding Illinoisans to be vigilant about election misinformation and election-related financial fraud. Don't let scammers steal your vote, your identity or your hard-earned dollars.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kwame Raoul'.

Kwame Raoul
Illinois Attorney General

Why are voters being targeted?

The goal of election misinformation can be to change your perception of a candidate or issue, but often the ultimate objective is to stop you from voting.

Bad actors might try to divert you from casting your ballot by telling you that you can vote through unavailable methods, such as via text message. They might give you the wrong date for voting or incorrect locations for polling places. They might say that you are not eligible to vote or that you could face legal trouble, like being served with a warrant or pursued by debt collectors, if you vote.

Another tactic bad actors utilize to convince you not to vote is posing as a member of your community or someone you would respect to promote voting boycotts or argue that your vote doesn't matter.

Scammers also exploit the increase in text messages, emails and other communication around the election to steal personal information or money through tactics like fake voter registration drives, text phishing scams and soliciting donations by posing as political candidates or political action committees (PACs).



How can you spot deepfakes?

Deepfakes appear to be photographs, videos, or audio recordings of real people. As technology advances, they are becoming more difficult to spot.

But there are some possible indicators:

Look for strange coloring, lighting or shadows to help spot deepfake videos. The subject of a deepfake might move unnaturally, and the audio of the voice might not match the person's mouth movements or facial expressions.

Look for irregularities in the details of AI-generated photos. Does anything look distorted? Do the subjects' hands appear strange or do the angles and proportions of their bodies or clothing look unnatural? Are there odd architectural features, such as too many doors or windows in a room? AI-generated photos often have strange textures, such as glossy or hazy effects. You might notice blurry spots or an overall effect that makes the image look as if it has been airbrushed.

The technology is constantly improving, so the absence of these possible indicators is not a guarantee that the content is real.

What can you do to protect yourself from election misinformation?

- **Know the basics about elections in Illinois and have your own plan to vote.** Consult the [Illinois State Board of Elections](#) (SBE) and local election authorities for information and questions about where, when, or how to vote, as well as your voter registration status. The League of Women Voters of Illinois has a list of useful [election facts](#) and offers [other resources](#) to avoid election misinformation.
- **Verify election information with official sources.** If you receive a phone call or text message with information about voting or elections, be mindful that the information may be inaccurate or fake. Double-check information independently with the SBE.
- **Do not rely on chatbots or search engine AI to answer questions about elections or voting.** These sources can accidentally generate misinformation by incorporating errors as they compile information from multiple online sources.

- **Be skeptical of images, audio, videos and articles circulating online that elicit a strong emotional reaction.** If you see incendiary, sensational or surprising content about the elections or candidates be especially cautious. Check to see if the information is being reported by legitimate news outlets or being shared by the subject of the post or the supposed source of the information.
- **Report misinformation.** If you encounter content on social media that you suspect is a deepfake, report it on the platform. Report misinformation about the election process, such as inaccurate times or locations, to the [SBE through its website](#).
- **Stop the spread of misinformation.** Do not share or engage with content that you have not verified to be real and accurate. Even liking or reacting to a post can boost the number of people who will see potentially false information.
- **Do not rely on AI disclosures or AI-detecting software.** Although some online platforms require disclosures that content is AI-generated, these requirements are often not followed, and AI-generated content frequently lacks these disclosures. There are tools for detecting AI-generated content, but they are not consistently accurate.
- **Avoid typical tactics used by scammers that may be disguised as communication about campaigns or the election.** Do not click links in unsolicited text messages or emails from unknown sources. If an email or text appears to be from a known source, verify it before clicking links. Find out more about avoiding common election scams in [this guide](#) from the AARP. If you believe you have been the victim of identity theft or financial fraud file a complaint on the [Attorney General's website](#).
- **Register to vote through trusted sources,** such as [the SBE's Online Voter Application](#) or the Illinois Secretary of State [Motor Voter Registration service](#) at DMV facilities. Find out more about avoiding voter registration scams in this [consumer alert](#) from the Federal Trade Commission.
- **If you see something on Election Day report it.** The Attorney General's office provides teams of monitors on the day of the election to ensure that voters' rights are protected, and polling places are accessible. Voters who feel their voting rights have been violated or who have witnessed concerning behavior should report it to the Attorney General's office or local law enforcement.

