



AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
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January 10, 2022

Paul Reed

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health, RADM, U.S. Public Health Service, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Washington, DC

Via Regulations.gov

Subject: Public Comment Providing Evidence Showing Relationship Between Health and Voting
Comment Reference: 86 FR 68677

Dear Deputy Assistant Secretary Reed:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association, a diverse community of public health professionals that champions the health of all people and communities, I write to express support for including key voting metrics in the development of Healthy People 2030.

Decades ago, the Institute of Medicine [established in a report](#) that voting is a public health issue because it helps shape "the conditions in which people can be healthy." The ballot box is where community members can come together to decide on key issues that shape our response to today's public health emergencies: police brutality, gun violence, climate change and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. A review conducted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Rand Corporation of 64 studies focusing on the relationship between voting and health found that good health was consistently positively associated with higher likelihood of voter participation. The link between voting and health is clear and evidence-based; therefore, any comprehensive strategy to advance population health should include voting as a key metric and area for development.

The Healthy People program is an important nationwide framework for advancing the health of all Americans, a goal that the American Public Health Association shares. The Healthy People program already has a history of recognizing the importance of voting in its framework, including the relationship between voting and health in its Healthy People 2020 program. Based on the strong evidence that voting influences public health and recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions such as *Shelby County v. Holder* and *Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee* that have eroded key voting protections, I urge you to include voting metrics in the development of the Healthy People 2030 framework.

Sincerely,

Georges C. Benjamin, MD
Executive Director