



## Illinois state workers receive paid day off on Election Day

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Illinois is one of only twelve states in which Election day is a state holiday. One economist says it's a political power play. State data shows it's costly.

According to the Council of State Governments, Illinois is one of 12 states in which Election Day is a state holiday. And since 1943, Illinois has granted state workers a paid day off.

Chris Edwards, economist and editor of "Downsizing the Federal Government," a project at the Cato Institute, said the day off benefits those who are more likely to support Democrats because the political makeup of the state-worker population generally leans left.

"If you look at state and local government workers, something like 40 percent or more vote Democrat, and only 25 percent or so identify as Republicans," Edwards said. "This is an important issue because there are 16 million state and local workers in the United States, so this is a big chunk of the electorate. I don't think it's right that there's an advantage being given here."

A report by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission said that Election Day, as with any paid holiday, means added costs for taxpayers. Statistics from the governor's office show one day's payroll amounts to an estimated \$13 million for agencies controlled by the governor.

Edwards adds that any state holiday represents one more day of lost productivity.

"I also don't think there is a big problem if there's a bit of a hurdle (getting to polling places on an election day). I mean, there's a responsibility on the part of individuals to put some effort into voting," Edwards said. "It is one of your most important responsibilities as a citizen."

Election Day holidays are not exclusive to Democratic-leaning states. Besides Illinois, voters in Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Montana, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and West Virginia all have a biennial state holiday in November that falls on election day.