

Urban Beat Commentary

March 2026 Edition

America at a Crossroads: The Trouble Facing the 2026 Midterms

As the 2026 midterm elections approach, the United States is entering one of the most tense and uncertain voting seasons in recent memory. Across the country, people are asking the same question: **Can our election system hold up under growing pressure?**

This year, several events have raised concerns about how votes are counted, who controls elections, and whether Americans can trust the results. Two issues stand out: the seizure of ballots in Georgia and the national fight over how voting districts are drawn, also known as reportioning or redistricting.

A Shocking Event in Georgia

One of the most surprising developments came when federal agents seized hundreds of boxes of **original ballots** and voting records from Fulton County, Georgia. This kind of action is extremely rare. Local officials were alarmed because removing original ballots from county custody violates normal election procedures. They also said they weren't given a complete list of what was taken, which made it even harder to track the materials.

Federal officials say they are investigating possible problems with how the records were stored. But many election experts worry that removing ballots from local control—especially ballots from past presidential elections sets a dangerous precedent. It raises questions about whether law enforcement could influence or disrupt how elections are run.

For ordinary voters, this event has heightened the fear that elections are becoming another battleground in national politics rather than a neutral, trusted system.

The Power of the Map: Repportioning the Elections

At the same time, states across the country are fighting over voting maps. Every ten years, districts are redrawn to reflect population changes. But in recent years, both major political parties have used map-drawing to gain an advantage, sometimes creating strange-looking districts designed to favor one side.

In 2026, this fight grew even more heated. Court decisions have allowed some states to redraw maps in ways that may add seats for one party while reducing seats for the other. Because control of Congress can change with just a few seats, these maps could decide who leads the House of Representatives next year.

Some states say they are correcting older, unfair maps. Others argue that the new maps are even more biased. Either way, voters are left trying to understand how political lines—not their ballots—might decide winners and losers.

A Midterm That Will Test the System

Taken together, the Georgia ballot seizure and the nationwide battles over redistricting reveal a deeper truth:

Trust in the election system is weaker than at any time in decades.

The 2026 midterms aren't just about choosing leaders. They're a test of whether the country can maintain fair, stable, and dependable elections amid intense division. Voters, officials, and courts will all play a role in determining whether the system stays strong or whether these challenges push it toward a breaking point.

A Call to Take Part

These challenges may feel overwhelming, but they also show why participation matters more than ever.

Elections only work when people engage. When we learn the issues, ask questions, and cast our ballots, we help protect the system that protects our freedoms.

Your vote shapes who represents you, how your community is treated, and what direction the country takes next.

So, this year, **make a plan.**

Mark your calendar.

Talk to friends and family.

Show up and vote.

The future of our elections doesn't depend only on officials or courts — it depends on **all of us** deciding that democracy is worth participating in.

#####

Herman C Collins, Public Affairs Consultant

Disclaimer: This Ed-Op Commentary is a segment of Urban Beat, a publication of the Urban League of San Diego County. While its content aims to foster discussion of current events, it does not represent the views or policies of the Urban League's management, nor does it constitute an endorsement of any political opinions expressed herein.