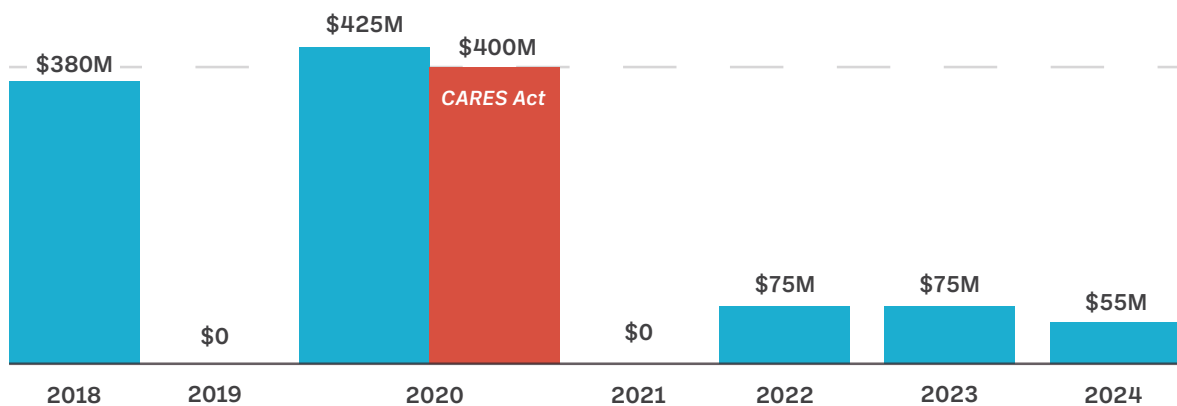


# Providing Regular and Robust Federal Funding for State and Local Election Offices

The Department of Homeland Security designated our election system as critical infrastructure in 2017. That designation was not accompanied by consistent, reliable, and adequate federal funding, leaving state and local election officials saddled with an unfunded mandate. With evolving [cyber and physical security threats](#), officials serving on the frontlines of our democracy have had to become experts in cybersecurity, digital communication, public relations, ballot audits, and de-escalation and risk management. Regular, predictable federal funding will ensure that election officials are able to continue to meet their core responsibilities of facilitating voter access to the polls and that ballots are counted accurately and transparently.

Currently states and localities fund the majority of election services. Congress provides funding to states to help run federal elections through [Election Security Grants](#). These grants are administered by the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) and are managed by each state’s secretary of state or chief election officer. They can then be sub-granted to local officials who can put the funds immediately to work.

**Election Security Grants 2018 to Present**



Source: Congressional Research Service, based on review of appropriations measures.

**The Problem:** Funds for these much needed grants are inconsistent making it difficult to plan for longer term staffing, cybersecurity, and ongoing training needs.

In both FY22 and FY23, Congress appropriated just \$75 million for election infrastructure — just a fraction of the \$400 million that election officials and outside experts have called for. In FY24, Congress appropriated only [\\$55 million](#), putting election officials in an even tighter predicament to continue administering safe and secure elections at a time when foreign adversaries threaten cyber attacks and AI generated deepfakes to disrupt our free and fair elections. Spread over 50 states, D.C., and five territories, that sum does not come close to meeting the needs of election officials.

**The Solution:** For the FY25 federal budget, election officials and advocates are continuing to call for the appropriation of [\\$400 million in HAVA Election Security Grants](#), with at least half the funds directed to local election offices.

**Timing Matters:** Election officials need additional funds promptly! Grants take time to distribute, as do procurement processes for new technology and training for new staff. Ensuring a secure and transparent 2024 election means increasing federal funding for election officials as soon as possible.

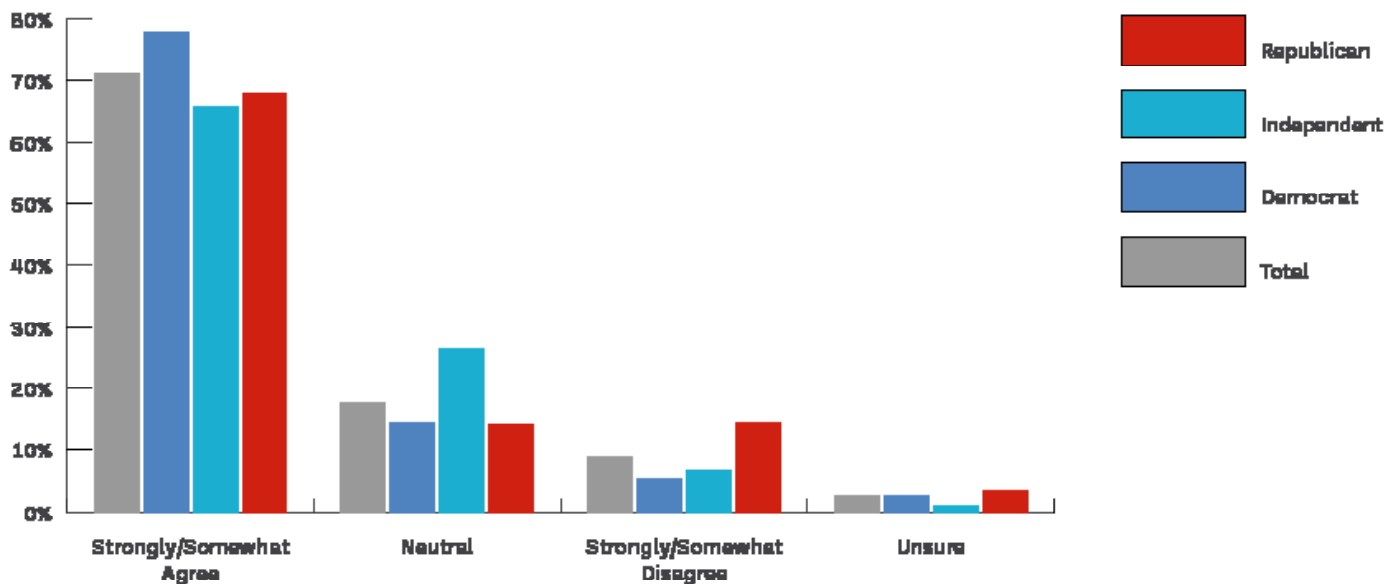
**Uncertainty Erodes Preparedness:** Because grant funding is appropriated yearly, election officials are unable to rely on these funds for long term investments typically required for cybersecurity infrastructure and staffing. IT professionals hired using grant funds one year might have to be let go the next if funding levels are not maintained.

**Bipartisan Opportunity:** Federal funding of elections is the one area of bipartisan agreement on election policy. From 2018-2024, Congress appropriated nearly \$1.4 billion in election funding on a largely bipartisan basis. A [May 2024 poll](#) commissioned by Issue One showed that 71% of Americans — including 78% of Democrats and 68% of Republicans — strongly or somewhat agree that the federal government should provide election administrators with regular and consistent funding to help administer elections.

### Election Officials Have Used Federal EAC Election Security Grants to...

- Implement post-election audits
- Improve voter registration systems
- Replace paperless voting machines
- Purchase high-speed tabulators
- Create ballot tracking systems
- Purchase ballot paper
- Hire cybersecurity experts
- Train staff in cybersecurity
- Install security cameras
- Harden security of physical spaces
- Recruit and train poll workers
- Subgrant funds to county election offices

### Public Support for Federal Funding of Elections



N = 1,001 registered voters, May 2024

If you have any questions or would like to get in touch with Issue One, please contact:

- Carah Ong Whaley, Director of Election Protection, at [carah@issueone.org](mailto:carah@issueone.org)
- Jesper Sullivan den Bergh, Legislative Manager, at [jbergh@issueone.org](mailto:jbergh@issueone.org)