

Safe, secure and accessible elections: Protecting the right to vote during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Introductions

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Overview

- COVID-19's Impact on Elections in Illinois and Wisconsin
- What is Vote By Mail?
- What is Happening at the State and Federal Level?
- Questions



Illinois and Wisconsin



COVID-19's Impact on Illinois' Elections



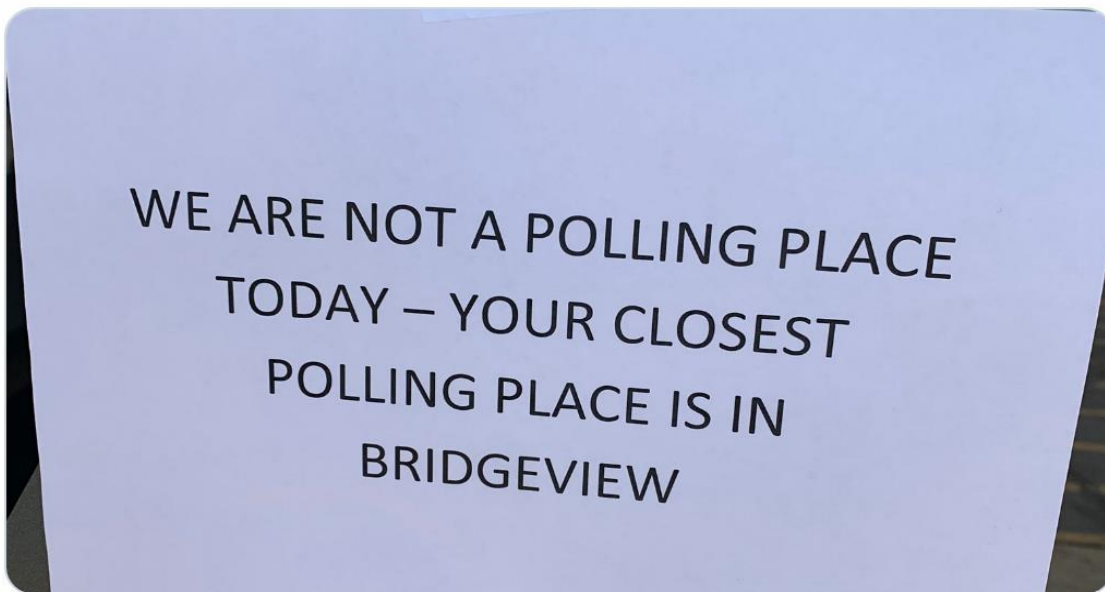
Charles Rex Abrogast of AP





Ben Bradley  @BenBradleyTV · Mar 17

Our local polling place is closed. Sign (and [@cookcountyclerk](#) website) say my closest polling place is Bridgeview courthouse, 12 miles away. That's not going to be good for turnout.



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COVID-19's Impact on Wisconsin Elections



WI voters had to make the unacceptable choice between the right to vote and their health and safety during the pandemic

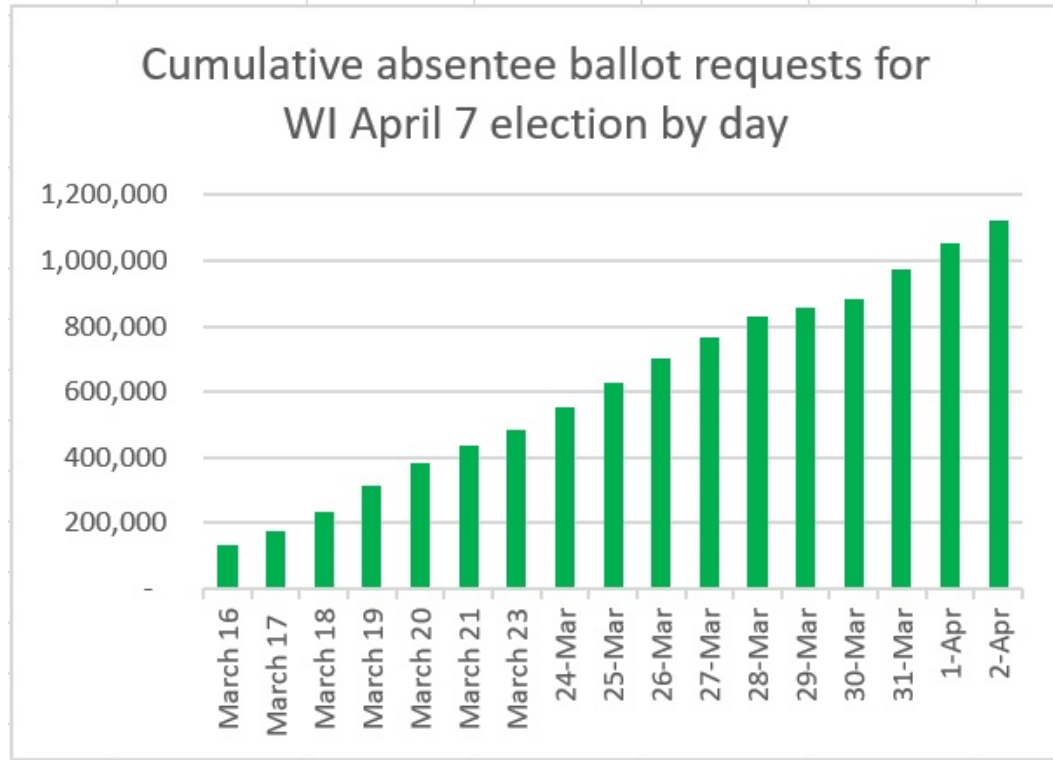


COVID-19's Impact on Wisconsin Elections

- What happened in Wisconsin during the April election?
- Why did it occur?
- What impact did the pandemic have on the voters of Wisconsin?
- How can we avoid a repeat in November and beyond?



COVID-19's Impact on Wisconsin Elections



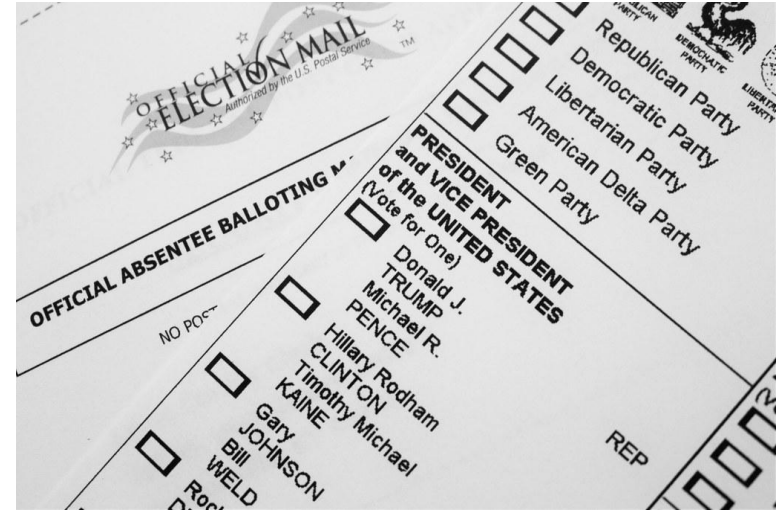
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What is Vote By Mail?



Casting a Ballot by Mail

- A common practice in the United States, with variations.
- For most Americans, we request an absentee ballot by mail.
- The behind-the-scenes process is pretty complicated.



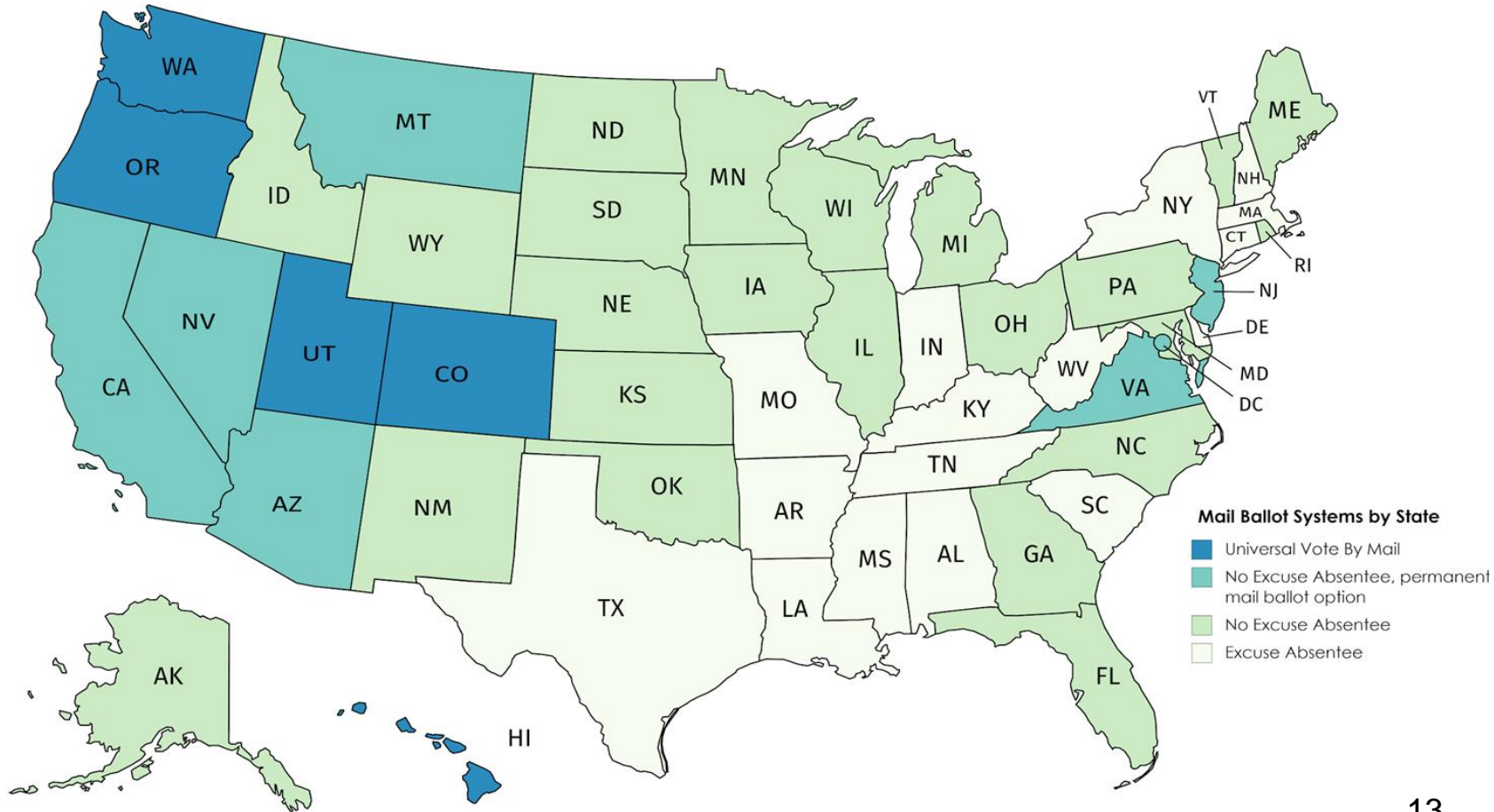


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Common Cause

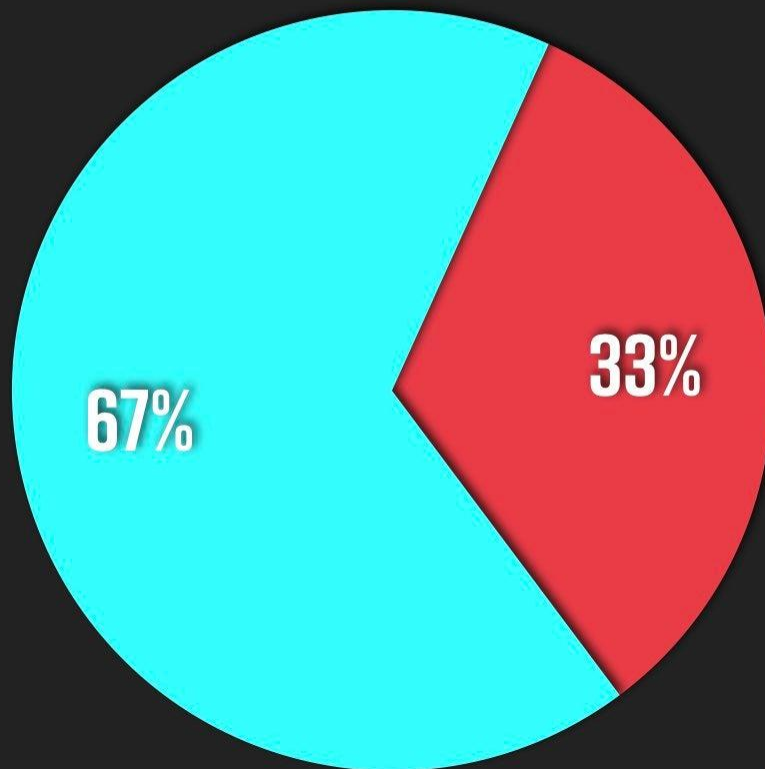


VOTE BY MAIL

FOR THE 2020 GENERAL ELECTION THIS NOVEMBER, DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF STATES USING ONLY VOTE BY MAIL INSTEAD OF VOTING IN PERSON?

 SUPPORT

 OPPOSE



Universal Vote By Mail

- Every registered voter is mailed a ballot
- These states typically include online voter registration, and some include Automatic Voter Registration
- In-person voting is maintained through drop boxes and vote centers
- Process that is implemented over time



No Excuse Absentee (Illinois is in this category)

- Most common form of mail voting in America
- Voters do not need to submit an excuse about why they cannot vote in person on Election Day
- Voters must submit an application - in some states, this requires additional information
- Ballot is then mailed to the voter, who must return the ballot within a specific timeframe

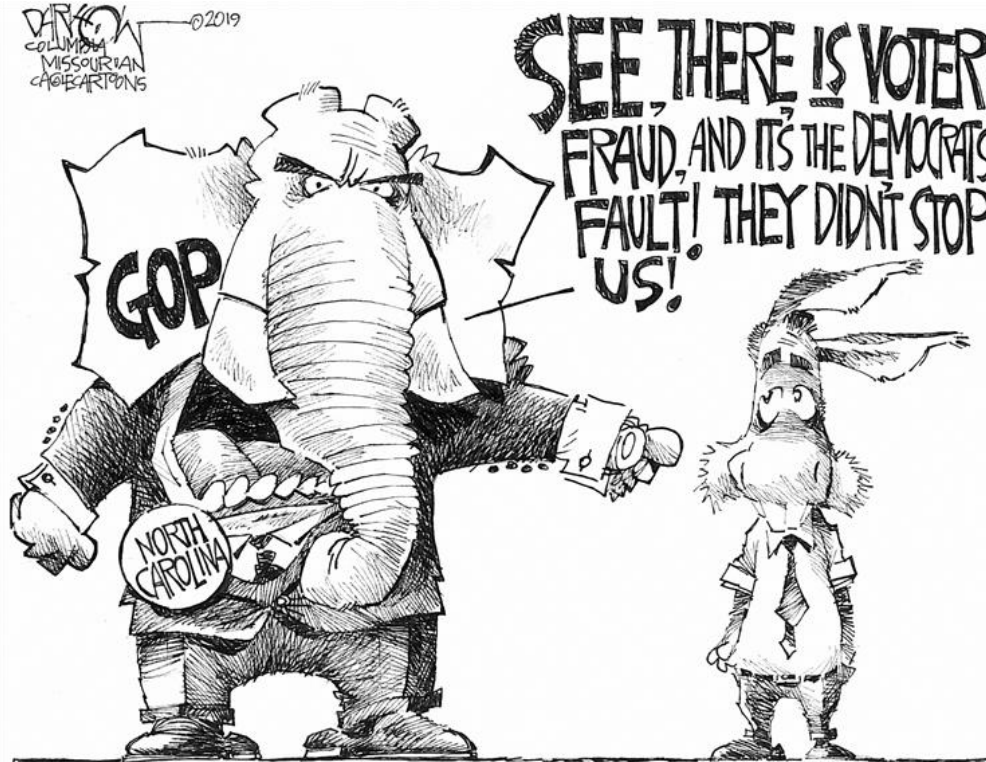


Excuse Absentee

- Considered the most restrictive in terms of vote-by-mail
- Voter must provide an acceptable excuse as to why they cannot vote in person
- These states have lower level of Absentee Ballots cast



Disinformation around Voting By Mail



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How Do We Prepare for November?



What are some Current Proposals?

- Mail every registered voter a ballot
- Mail every registered voter a ballot request form
- Require that election authorities provide prepaid postage
- Extend early voting periods
- Overhaul elections infrastructure



What is Happening in Illinois?

- Prepare for the likely increase of mail ballots
- Retaining early voting and in-person voting locations,
 - while practicing CDC guidelines of social distancing and sanitation
 - ensure that we are not disenfranchising communities with which mailing a ballot may not be feasible.
- Need to recruit younger election judges



Important Dates for November



Indivisible IL Position

- **ASKS: we need to get more ballots to more people**
 - Every registered voter should get a ballot AND ensure that all jurisdictions include envelopes with prepaid postage for all voters
 - Expand early voting
 - A statewide ballot tracking mechanism must be created to remove any barriers to receiving, tracking and returning an absentee ballot
- **Mission Statement:** We demand safe, secure and accessible elections to protect the right to vote during the pandemic and beyond



What is Happening at the Federal Level?

- The Need for Federal Funding
- CARES Act
- How will Illinois use federal dollars?



Action Items



- **LOCAL:** Contact your local State Rep. and Senator and push for expanded VBM
 - [Use this tool](#) to find their contact info
- **FEDERAL:** Contact your Congressperson ([click here](#) to enter your ZIP code) and call your Senators at [1.888.415.4527](tel:18884154527) - we need our elections to be funded federally!
- [VOTE-BY-MAIL WORKING DOCUMENT](#)
- **SOCIAL MEDIA & PHONEBANKS:** #VirusFreeVoting, #SecureOurVote
 - Join us for a Phonebank & SM on May 20, Wednesday at 10am
 - <https://bit.ly/VirusFreeVotingILLINOIS>
 - LINK: <http://bit.ly/IL9-weekly-mtg> (Best on Chrome)
- **LETTERS-TO-THE-EDITOR:** LTE tools for local paper available
 - [Click here to draft your letter](#)
 - [Common Cause Letter Tool](#)



Questions?



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Contact Information

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