

POLICY
PLAYBOOK

Published May 2018

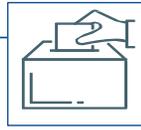
MODERN AND
SECURE ELECTIONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2	3
Policy Options.....	3	24
Communications and Messaging.....	25	29
Additional Resources.....	30	31

POLICY PLAYBOOK

MODERN AND SECURE ELECTIONS



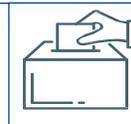
INTRODUCTION

Now, more than ever, the strength of our democracy is not something we can take for granted. Our democracy works only as long as people participate and believe in our election systems. To that end, we need to ensure that our system of registration and voting is modern, secure, and accessible for all eligible voters. Only by doing so can we ensure that our elected officials are accountable to the people and that our representation reflects the will and needs of the people.

These reforms are even more important in an environment where the President and his administration repeat damaging—and patently false—claims of widespread voter fraud such as those advanced by the since-disbanded Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity. Stories of Russian hacking serve to fuel Donald Trump’s unpopularity, but they also degrade voters’ faith in our democracy and could diminish participation.

Since 2002, states have introduced hundreds of bills that would make it harder for ordinary citizens to vote. Under the guise of securing elections and preventing (almost nonexistent) voter fraud at the polls, Republicans have moved forward a series of politically motivated policy attacks in an effort to suppress the vote. Many state legislatures have cut back on early voting and tried to eliminate same-day registration, while others have added burdensome new photo ID requirements. These restrictions each disproportionately impact communities of color and the working poor.

These exclusionary policies also run counter to Americans’ deeply held belief that every eligible voter has the right and responsibility to cast a ballot. This Policy Playbook outlines a series of common-sense policies designed to update our election system so that more eligible Americans can register, vote, and have their voices heard, while also safeguarding our elections with mandatory audits and better technology to protect against hacking and tampering. Taken together or implemented in parts, as a package or in one bill, these policies would help ensure the integrity and fairness of our election system.



POLICY OPTIONS

This brief recommends a comprehensive set of voting reforms that expand mail ballot delivery and improve in person voter service options, both during early-vote periods and on Election Day. This combination provides voters with secure options to register and vote, while decreasing barriers to voting caused by a lack of access to transportation, work schedules, weather, age, or disabilities. Combining mail ballot voting with expanded early in person voting also reduces the physical and technological stress on polling places on Election Day, for both voters waiting in line and election officials attempting to keep proper staffing levels and records maintained. The major policy options in this brief include expanded mail ballot voting, expanded voting opportunities through voter centers, and improved registration updates and records. These policies can be bundled together in one bill, or they can be implemented separately as less comprehensive—but still impactful—reforms to improve voter access and modernize elections in situations where full comprehensive voting reform may not be politically or practically feasible, or where an incremental approach is otherwise preferable.

Expanding Mail Ballot Voting

A well-designed, optional, paper mail ballot system with tracking and auditing is a cost-effective way to increase voter participation. Additionally, if a voting system is entirely on paper, it provides security from digital hack attempts and confidence in the results as a fully auditable set of records. It allows voters to conveniently complete and return their ballots from home when they have the time and opportunity. Expanded mail balloting works best when paired with ample in person options through the early voting period and on Election Day. As of 2017, all states and D.C. offer some form of absentee ballot before Election Day. However, 20 states require voters to apply for an absentee ballot based on a list of approved excuses. In addition, 14 states require absentee ballots to be cast in person during a set time period instead of via mail. To improve access, states should add to in person voting options by proactively sending mail ballots to all registered voters and/or increasing the availability of no-excuse absentee mail ballots on a permanent basis. Increased access to mail ballots should be paired with improved registration and list maintenance to enhance accuracy and the tracking of ballots. Below are some of the key elements of expanded voting by mail, with examples of states that have implemented them.

Mail Ballots to All Registered Voters

In 2013, Colorado modernized its election system to provide for mail ballots to be sent to all registered voters well in advance of early vote centers opening. If a voter is registered by a certain date, they receive a mail ballot, which may be returned by mail or in person via a drop box or at a vote center. A voter may also choose to vote in person at a vote center instead. In this, and in all instances where there is the potential for multiple ballots, the “first ballot in” rule applies: if a mail ballot has been returned, the tracking code on the envelope is immediately updated in the database, and that same voter cannot vote



in person or request a replacement mail ballot¹. Similarly, if a person votes in person during the early voting period or on Election Day, the database is immediately updated so that a mail ballot previously sent to that voter will not be valid or counted if it is returned later.

An important consideration when adopting a policy of sending mail ballots to all voters is to adjust the deadlines for mailing ballots, registration updates, and online voter registration, working backward from Election Day and the early voting period. With a comprehensive system, even if a voter misses the deadline for receiving a mail ballot, they are still able to vote in person or pick up a mail ballot to return later at a vote center. A more detailed discussion of that option can be found in Colorado Statutes § 1-2-201 (see below). The U.S. Postal Service also generally recommends setting mail-in dates earlier in the week, since mail volume tends to increase later in the week.

[Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-7.5-103 \(2017\)](#)

(4) “Mail ballot election” means an election for which eligible electors receive ballots by mail and vote by mailing those ballots, depositing the ballots at, as applicable, drop-off locations or voter service and polling centers, or, as applicable, by voting at a voter service and polling center.

[Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-5-401 \(2017\)](#)

(1) For all general, primary, congressional vacancy, coordinated, odd-year, and recall elections, and for any election in which the governing body of a political subdivision other than a county determines that an election shall be by mail ballot, the county clerk and recorder or designated election official for the political subdivision, as applicable, shall conduct the election by mail ballot; except that votes cast at voter service and polling centers may be by paper ballots or by electronic or electromechanical voting systems.

(2) For any election that the governing body of a political subdivision determines will be an independent mail ballot election, the designated election official for that political subdivision shall conduct the election by mail ballot in accordance with article 13.5 of this title.

[Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-2-201 \(2017\)](#)

(3) (a) Any other provisions of this title to the contrary notwithstanding, an elector is permitted to vote in any primary, presidential, general, coordinated, special legislative, municipal, congressional vacancy, special district, or other election if he or she timely registers to vote before or on the date of such election.

(b) An elector may timely register to vote by:

(1) Submitting an application through a voter registration drive no later than twenty-two days before the election; except that, if the twenty-second day before an election is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the elector is permitted to register on the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday;

¹ Making sure this happens securely required Colorado to modernize the secure state online voter database to allow counties to access it in real-time. Under the modernized system, voters can continue to register to vote or update voter registration addresses up to and on Election Day with immediate secure updates in the database.



(II) Registering through a high school, in accordance with part 4 of this article 2;

(III) Submitting an application through the mail, a voter registration agency, a local driver's license examination facility, or the online voter registration system established pursuant to section 1-2-202.5 (7)(c), through the eighth day prior to an election; except that, if the eighth day before an election is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the elector is permitted to register on the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday;

(IV) Appearing in person at the elector's county clerk and recorder's office at any time during which registration is permitted at the office; or

(V) Appearing in person at a voter service and polling center pursuant to section 1-2-217.7 at any time during which the voter service and polling center is open, including on election day.

(4) To receive a ballot by mail for an election conducted under this code, an elector must submit his or her voter registration application on or before the eighth day before the election.

North Dakota Century Code 16.1-11.1-01 (2017)

(1) The board of county commissioners of a county may conduct an election by mail ballot. The mail ballot election must include city elections administered by the county auditor and may include any other election administered by the county auditor pursuant to an agreement with the governing body of a political subdivision within the county. The board shall designate one or more polling places in the county to be open on the day of the election for voting in the usual manner. The county auditor shall place a notice at all polling places in the county used at the last statewide election which states the location of the polling places open for the election. The county auditor shall keep a record of each mail ballot provided to qualified electors and provide to the election board at each polling place open on the day of the election a list of every person who applied for a mail ballot.

(2) The board of county commissioners of a county may conduct an election partially by mail ballot. If the board of county commissioners chooses to conduct an election partially by mail ballot, the commission may use mail ballots for any precinct in which fewer than four hundred votes were cast for the office of governor at the last general election at which that office was on the ballot.

Oregon Revised Statutes § 254.470 (2017)

(1) The Secretary of State by rule shall establish requirements and criteria for the designation of places of deposit for the ballots cast in an election. The rules shall also specify the dates and times the places of deposit must be open and the security requirements for the places of deposit. At a minimum, the places designated under this section shall be open on the date of the election for a period of eight or more hours, but must be open until at least 8 p.m. At each place of deposit designated under this section, the county clerk shall prominently display a sign stating that the location is an official ballot drop site.

(2) (a) Except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this subsection, the county clerk shall mail by nonforwardable mail an official ballot with a return identification envelope and a secrecy



envelope not sooner than the 20th day before the date of an election and not later than the 14th day before the date of the election, to each active elector of the electoral district as of the 21st day before the date of the election.

(b) If the county clerk determines that an active elector of the electoral district as of the 21st day before the date of the election does not receive daily mail service from the United States Postal Service, the county clerk shall mail by nonforwardable mail an official ballot with a return identification envelope and a secrecy envelope to the elector not sooner than the 20th day before the date of an election and not later than the 18th day before the date of the election.

(c) In the case of ballots to be mailed to addresses outside this state to electors who are not military or overseas electors, the county clerk may mail the ballots not sooner than the 29th day before the date of the election.

...

(4) For each elector who updates a voter registration after the deadline in ORS 247.025 (Registration deadline), the county clerk shall make the official ballot, the return identification envelope and the secrecy envelope available either by mail or at the county clerk's office or at another place designated by the county clerk. An elector to whom this subsection applies must request a ballot from the county clerk.

Revised Code of Washington § 29A.40.010 (2017)

Each active registered voter of the state, overseas voter, and service voter shall automatically be issued a mail ballot for each general election, special election, or primary. Overseas voters and service voters are authorized to cast the same ballots, including those for special elections, as a registered voter of the state would receive under this chapter. Each active registered voter shall continue to receive a ballot by mail until the death or disqualification of the voter, cancellation of the voter's registration, or placing the voter on inactive status.

No Excuse Permanent Vote-by-Mail Option for Voters

As of 2017, 27 states and D.C. allowed mail voting without any required excuse, but only eight of them plus D.C. offer a permanent vote-by-mail list for voters. Offering this option avoids the extra work and potential security concerns for both the voter and the election authority, of annual applications for absentee ballots. Instead, once the voter files the application to join the permanent vote-by-mail list, that voter receives a mail ballot automatically for all future elections. Offering permanent vote by mail to all voters without a required excuse is potentially an intermediate step when modernizing elections in a state that currently does not offer any of the options recommended here. By the time Colorado passed its comprehensive reform in 2013, nearly 75 percent of voters were already voting by mail.

The list can be updated securely by drawing on the National Change of Address (NCOA) database, which is discussed in more detail in the code below describing Montana's use of a permanent vote-by-mail system. Voters are marked "inactive" when pre-election confirmation mail is returned as a bad



address or no longer deliverable; states should not mark a person “inactive” simply because they fail to respond to a notice. States should also avoid any provision that categorizes a permanent vote-by-mail voter “inactive” for simply choosing not to return a ballot in any given election, and those voters should continue to automatically receive ballots by mail in the following election. Arizona and Montana are two states that have added a permanent vote-by-mail option to their system; the relevant portions of their statutes are excerpted here.

Arizona Revised Statutes § 16-544 (2017)

A. Any voter may request to be included on a permanent list of voters to receive an early ballot for any election for which the county voter registration roll is used to prepare the election register. The county recorder of each county shall maintain the permanent early voting list as part of the voter registration roll.

B. In order to be included on the permanent early voting list, the voter shall make a written request specifically requesting that the voter’s name be added to the permanent early voting list for all elections in which the applicant is eligible to vote. A permanent early voter request form shall conform to requirements prescribed in the instructions and procedures manual issued pursuant to section 16-452. The application shall allow for the voter to provide the voter’s name, residence address, mailing address in the voter’s county of residence, date of birth and signature and shall state that the voter is attesting that the voter is a registered voter who is eligible to vote in the county of residence. The voter shall not list a mailing address that is outside of this state for the purpose of the permanent early voting list unless the voter is an absent uniformed services voter or overseas voter as defined in the uniformed and overseas citizens absentee voting act of 1986 (P.L. 99-410; 42 United States Code section 1973ff-6). In lieu of the application, the applicant may submit a written request that contains the required information.

C. On receipt of a request to be included on the permanent early voting list, the county recorder or other officer in charge of elections shall compare the signature on the request form with the voter’s signature on the voter’s registration form and, if the request is from the voter, shall mark the voter’s registration file as a permanent early ballot request.

Montana Code Annotated § 13-13-212 (2017)

(3) An elector may at any time request to be mailed an absentee ballot for each subsequent election in which the elector is eligible to vote as long as the elector remains qualified to vote and resides at the address provided in the initial application. The request may be made when the individual applies for voter registration using the standard application form provided for in 13-1-210.

(4) (a) An elector who has requested to be on the absentee ballot list and who has not filed a change of address with the U.S. postal service must continue to receive an absentee ballot for each subsequent election.

(b) (i) The election administrator shall biennially mail a forwardable address confirmation form to each elector who is listed in the national change of address system of the U.S. postal service



as having changed the elector's address.

(ii) The address confirmation form must request the elector's driver's license number or the last four digits of the elector's social security number. The address confirmation form must include an e-mail address for the election administrator that can be used by the elector to confirm that the elector wishes to continue to receive an absentee ballot and to provide the requested information. The address confirmation form must be mailed in January of every even-numbered year. The address confirmation form is for elections to be held between February 1 following the mailing through January of the next even-numbered year.

(iii) An election administrator may provide a website on which the elector can provide the required information to confirm that the elector wishes to remain on the absentee ballot list.

(iv) If the elector is providing confirmation using the address confirmation form, the elector shall sign the form, indicate the address to which the absentee ballot should be sent, provide the elector's driver's license number or the last four digits of the elector's social security number, and return the form to the election administrator.

(v) The elector may provide the required information to the election administrator using:

(A) the e-mail address provided on the form; or

(B) a website established by the election administrator.

(vi) The elector does not need to provide a signature when using either option provided in subsection (4)(b)(v) to confirm that the elector wishes to remain on the absentee ballot list.

(vii) If the form is not completed and returned or if the elector does not respond using the options provided in subsection (4)(b)(v), the election administrator shall remove the elector from the absentee ballot list.



Clear and Accessible Methods to Return Mail Ballots

Expanded use of mail ballots should be coupled with ballot return requirements that are easily understood and accessed by voters, while maintaining ballot security. Ideally, voters should have access to as many methods of returning their ballot as possible, including by U.S. mail (postage paid), returning to a drop box, or in person return at vote centers. Drop boxes should be outside, secure, and accessible to public transportation, and/or drive-up accessible during non-business hours. Policies on the books in some states which only allow mail ballots to be returned by mail with postage paid by the voter, or which limit in person return to business hours at vote centers, decrease the impact of expanded mail-in options, and impose additional costs on voters in postage or in the time and the physical requirement to visit a vote center during business hours.

Paid Postage

It is a best practice to provide for prepaid return postage to increase accessibility for mail ballot return and to avoid imposing a cost on exercising the right to vote by mail ballot. Any jurisdiction deciding to use business reply mail should coordinate with local U.S. Postal Service officials to ensure postmarks and cancellation procedures match requirements in the law if the postmark will be the trigger for accepting a ballot for counting.

Arizona Revised Statutes § 16-542 (2017)

C. The county recorder or other officer in charge of elections shall mail the early ballot and the envelope for its return postage prepaid to the address provided by the requesting elector within five days after receipt of the official early ballots from the officer charged by law with the duty of preparing ballots pursuant to section 16-545...

2017 California Assembly Bill 216 (Amends Section 3010 of the Elections Code):

- (a) The elections official shall deliver all of the following to each qualified applicant:*
- (1) The ballot for the precinct in which the voter resides. In primary elections, this shall also be accompanied by the ballot for the central committee of the party for which the voter has disclosed a preference, if any.*
 - (2) All supplies necessary for the use and return of the ballot, including an identification envelope with prepaid postage for the return of the vote by mail ballot.*
- (b) An officer of this state shall not make a charge for services rendered to a voter under this chapter.*

Deadline for Mailed Ballots

With mailed ballots, states must decide whether ballots must be received by the election authority by a certain time on Election Day to be counted, or simply postmarked by Election Day. Both systems have advantages and disadvantages. A deadline to be postmarked by Election Day provides the most time for voters to participate, while a deadline to be received by the time the polls close allows for campaigns



and candidates to have results more quickly. In either case, states should make the rules abundantly clear so that voters know by when ballots must be returned and local election officials apply the same standard across jurisdictions.

Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-7.5-107 (2017)

(4)(b)(C)(II) If an eligible elector returns the ballot by mail, the elector must provide postage. The ballot shall be received at the office of the county clerk and recorder or designated election official or a designated drop-off location, which shall remain open until 7 p.m. on election day. All envelopes containing mail ballots must be in the hands of the county clerk and recorder or designated election official no later than 7 p.m. on the day of the election. Mail ballot envelopes received after 7 p.m. on the day of the election but postmarked on or before the day of the election will remain sealed and uncounted, but the elector's registration record shall not be canceled for failure to vote in a general election.

California Elections Code § 4103 (2017)

(b) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), any vote by mail ballot cast under this chapter shall be timely cast if it is received by the voter's elections official via the United States Postal Service or a bona fide private mail delivery company no later than three days after election day and either of the following is satisfied:

(1) The ballot is postmarked on or before election day or is time stamped or date stamped by a bona fide private mail delivery company on or before election day.

(2) If the ballot has no postmark, a postmark with no date, or an illegible postmark, the vote by mail ballot identification envelope is date stamped by the elections official upon receipt of the vote by mail ballot from the United States Postal Service or a bona fide private mail delivery company, and is signed and dated pursuant to Section 3011 on or before election day.

(c) For purposes of this section, "bona fide private mail delivery company" means a courier service that is in the regular business of accepting a mail item, package, or parcel for the purpose of delivery to a person or entity whose address is specified on the item.

Utah Election Code § 20A-3-306 (2017)

(2) Except as provided by Section 20A-1-308, an absentee ballot is not valid unless:

(a) in the case of an absentee ballot that is voted in person, the ballot is:

(i) applied for and cast in person at the office of the appropriate election officer no later than the Thursday before election day; or

(ii) submitted on election day at a polling location in the political subdivision where the absentee voter resides;

(b) in the case of an absentee ballot that is submitted by mail, the ballot is:

(i) clearly postmarked before election day, or otherwise clearly marked by the post office as received by the post office before election day; and



- (ii) received in the office of the election officer before noon on the day of the official canvass following the election; or*
- (c) in the case of a military-overseas ballot, the ballot is submitted in accordance with Section 20A-16-404.*

Ballot Drop-off

Experts recommend setting standards for the base number of drop boxes per voter, as well as guidelines for drop box placement that take into account factors such as geography, transportation options, and population density. These boxes should be secure but need not necessarily be staffed or subject to 24-hour surveillance, as such measures may be cost-prohibitive in many places. For example, the Oregon standard for outdoor drop boxes available for drive-by or pedestrian traffic requires that they are only accessible by a key held by authorized personnel and emptied on a set schedule. Drop boxes in high-traffic, low-time-commitment communities such as college campuses are also recommended. The most-used unstaffed drop box in Denver, Colorado, in 2016 was located outside a museum in the largest city park and could be accessed by driving into a parking lot, bike trails, public buses, and pedestrian traffic.

Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-5-102.9 (2017)

- 4) (a) In addition to providing voter service and polling centers in accordance with this section, counties shall also establish stand-alone drop-off locations for the purpose of allowing electors to deposit their completed mail ballots.*
- (b) (I) (A) All counties described in subparagraph (I) of paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of this section shall provide at least one drop-off location for each thirty thousand active voters in the county, but must provide a minimum of one stand-alone drop-off location.*
- (B) Only counties with at least twenty-five thousand active electors are required to provide stand-alone drop-off locations on the date of a general election and on the Saturday and Monday immediately preceding the date of a general election.*
- (II) The placement and security of each drop-off location shall be determined by each county, in accordance with the secretary of state's current security rules. With the exception of twenty-four hour secure drop boxes, each stand-alone drop-off location must be separate from voter service and polling centers.*
- (III) Counties are encouraged to designate community-based locations as stand-alone drop-off locations.*

California Elections Code § 4005 (2017)

- (a)(1)(A) At least two ballot dropoff locations are provided within the jurisdiction where the election is held or the number of ballot dropoff locations are fixed in a manner so that there is at least one ballot dropoff location provided for every 15,000 registered voters within the jurisdiction where the election is held, as determined on the 88th day before the day of the election, whichever results in more ballot dropoff locations. For purposes of this subparagraph, a vote center that includes an*



exterior ballot drop box counts only as a single ballot dropoff location. Ballot dropoff locations shall comply with the regulations adopted pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 3025.

(B) A ballot dropoff location provided for under this section consists of a secure, accessible, and locked ballot box located as near as possible to established public transportation routes and that is able to receive voted ballots. All ballot dropoff locations shall be open at least during regular business hours beginning not less than 28 days before the day of the election, and on the day of the election. At least one ballot dropoff location shall be an accessible, secured, exterior drop box that is available for a minimum of 12 hours per day including regular business hours.

Oregon Secretary of State Vote by Mail Procedures Manual (2015)²

(a) A ballot drop box located at an official dropsite must be:

1) Locked or sealed and accessible only by authorized personnel or deputized staff.

(A) The drop box must be transported only by election or deputized staff to elections facility on a schedule or as needed.

2) Secure from being moved or tampered with.

(A) The box may be exchanged for a locked or sealed empty box on a schedule or it may be re-locked or re-sealed when emptied by authorized personnel.

3) At staffed locations (such as libraries, city halls, etc.) and located in view of on-site staff.

(b) An outdoor drop box for drive-by or pedestrian traffic must be:

1) Accessible only by key in possession of authorized personnel.

2) Emptied according to an established schedule or more frequently if necessary.

(A) Transfer voted ballots in a locked or sealed ballot box, bag or pouch to the elections facility.

Revised Code of Washington 29A.40.160 (2017)

(15) For each primary, special election, and general election, the county auditor may provide election services at locations in addition to the voting center. The county auditor has discretion to establish which services will be provided at the additional locations, and which days and hours the locations will be open, except that the county auditor must establish a minimum of one ballot drop box per fifteen thousand registered voters in the county and a minimum of one ballot drop box in each city, town, and census-designated place in the county with a post office.

Rules regarding how counties or local election jurisdictions handle and transfer ballots placed in the wrong jurisdiction's drop box should also be adopted to provide for timely transfer to the correct jurisdiction, and uniform expectations for both election officials and voters. See the examples below from California and Colorado.

Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-7.5-107 (2017)

(7) If, by the close of polls, an elector deposits a ballot at a drop-off location in a county in which the elector does not reside, the county clerk and recorder, upon discovering that fact, shall timely deliver

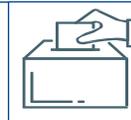
² Adopted in regulatory code as the official regulations governing procedures for vote-by-mail elections under Oregon law.



the ballot to the county clerk and recorder of the county in which the elector resides, who shall accept the ballot for processing.

California Elections Code § 3017 (2017)

(a) ...If a vote by mail ballot is returned to a precinct board at a polling place or vote center, or to a vote by mail ballot drop-off location, that is located in a county that is not the county of the elections official who issued the ballot, the elections official for the county in which the vote by mail ballot is returned shall forward the ballot to the elections official who issued the ballot no later than eight days after receipt.



Expanded In person Voting Opportunities through Vote Centers

In combination with the use of mail ballots, voters greatly benefit from expanded in person options both during early voting and on Election Day for voting, registration updates, replacement mail ballots, and similar services. During the early-vote window, voters should be able to access vote centers for replacement ballots, vote in person, update address information, complete voter registration, and access similar services. In-person voting should be subject to the “first ballot in” rule discussed in the prior section titled “Mail Ballots to All Registered Voters.” Vote centers should be intentionally designed to increase opportunities to vote, such as allowing voters to access any center they choose which is convenient for home, work, school, or other locations. This option is especially important for younger or more transient voters whose mailing information is less likely to be up-to-date, non-English speakers, and voters with disabilities, or those needing other personalized services. Such a move should also be accompanied by well-funded public education and outreach to ensure that all communities are involved in site location selection and are comfortable with participating in any revised voting process.

Transitioning voting systems from numerous local precinct polling places to larger vote centers throughout the county or election jurisdiction can allow for easier volunteer recruitment and a smaller, better-trained corps of election workers, which may result in reduced costs to both the county and the state. Vote centers also reduce the number of costly provisional ballots required when voters appear at the “wrong” polling place, since any voter can use any vote center in the jurisdiction regardless of where they live. Location, number, and use of vote centers are best tailored to the unique needs of each location and informed by community input. For example, jurisdictions that include a college or university should locate a vote center on campus to provide service for a population more likely to need to update their registration. Students can also serve as tech-savvy volunteers or election workers for the vote center. Some in the progressive movement will argue that a precinct-based system is preferable, as it keeps locations closer to voters’ homes and—in early times—there were valid security arguments to be made for precinct-based systems.

The combined options of returning ballots by mail, in a local drop box, or by voting at regional vote centers create multiple circles of geographic accessibility radiating from a voter’s home mailbox. As discussed above, this interconnected system linked to a live voter database provides secure ballot and vote tracking to ensure “first vote in” counts and avoid any risk of duplicate voting.

Number, Hours, and Locations of Vote Centers

State law should provide some flexibility to election jurisdictions for setting the number, hours, and locations of voter centers with a state minimum standard or formula to ensure proper allocation of resources and consistent voting experiences (such as a ratio of voters to vote centers). These standards should be set as a “floor,” allowing jurisdictions to provide greater access, but not less than the minimum amount. In terms of hours, it is ideal to have more than two weeks of early voting available, and states should also consider at least one weekend day and some weeknight evenings of vote center access to



accommodate working families or those with different schedules. Currently, 22 states and D.C. allow some weekend early voting, and the average window across all 33 states that allow early voting is 19 days.

It is also typical, and recommended, to have more vote centers open as Election Day nears. States can start with a smaller number of core locations which are open the entire early-vote period and then add supplemental locations in the final days. This will provide more access to voters as demand rises, without causing confusion by closing and opening different vote centers at different periods. Ideally, these locations can be used consistently in subsequent elections to provide voters greater familiarity over time. In addition to government office buildings, community locations like libraries and recreation centers should be considered as vote centers, as well as high-accessibility locations such as shopping centers and sites close to public transportation. Like current polling places, all vote centers should be accessible to those with disabilities, in line with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. State law can also provide for local election officials to set up mobile vote centers if other suitable options are not available in the community in question. States should also consider requiring local election authorities to conduct a transparent process each election year, with public participation, for vote center site selection in order to ensure that local factors are properly considered in the context of state guidelines.

Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-5-102.9 (2017)

- (1) (a) For general elections, each county clerk and recorder shall designate a minimum number of voter service and polling centers, as follows:
- (I) For counties with at least twenty-five thousand active electors:
 - (A) During the period designated for early voting, at least one voter service and polling center for each thirty thousand active electors; except that there must be at least one voter service and polling center in each such county; and
 - (B) On election day, at least one voter service and polling center for every fifteen thousand active electors, but no fewer than three in each such county.
 - (II) For counties with at least ten thousand, but fewer than twenty-five thousand, active electors:
 - (A) During the period designated for early voting, at least one voter service and polling center; and
 - (B) On election day, at least three voter service and polling centers.
 - (III) For counties with fewer than ten thousand active electors:
 - (A) During the period designated for early voting, at least one voter service and polling center; and
 - (B) On election day, at least one voter service and polling center.
- (b) (I) On and after November 8, 2016, for the purposes of paragraph (a) of this subsection (1), the number of active electors in a county is the number of active electors registered in the county on the date of the previous presidential election.
- (II) Repealed.



- (c) (I) In designating voter service and polling center locations pursuant to this subsection (1), each county clerk and recorder shall consider the following factors to address the needs of the county:
- (A) Proximity to public transportation lines and availability of parking;
 - (B) Geographic features, such as mountain passes, that tend to affect access and convenience;
 - (C) Equitable distribution across the county so as to afford maximally convenient options for electors;
 - (D) The existence and location of population centers;
 - (E) Access for persons with disabilities;
 - (F) Use of existing voting locations that typically serve a significant number of electors;
 - (G) Use of public buildings that are known to electors in the county, especially to the extent that using such buildings results in cost savings compared to other potential locations; and
 - (H) When private locations are considered or designated as voter service and polling centers in accordance with section 1-5-105 (3), methods and standards to ensure the security of voting conducted at such locations.
- (II) In designating voter service and polling centers, a county clerk and recorder shall solicit public comments.
- (d) Each county clerk and recorder shall submit the proposed voter service and polling center locations to the secretary of state as part of the mail ballot plan.
- (e) A county clerk and recorder may designate a greater number of voter service and polling centers than the minimum required by this section.
- (2) Voter service and polling centers must be open, at a minimum, for the fifteen-day period prior to and including the day of the election, except that voter service and polling centers are not required to be open on Sundays.

California Elections Code § 4005 (2017)

- (a)(3)(A) On the day of the election, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., inclusive, and on each of the three days before the election, for a minimum of eight hours per day, at least one vote center is provided for every 10,000 registered voters within the jurisdiction where the election is held, as determined on the 88th day before the day of the election. At least 90 percent of the number of vote centers required by this subparagraph shall be open for all four days during the required times. Up to 10 percent of the number of vote centers required by this subparagraph may be open for less than four days if at least one vote center is provided for every 10,000 registered voters on each day.
- (B) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), for a jurisdiction with fewer than 20,000 registered voters, a minimum of two voter centers are provided on the day of the election and on each of the three days before the election within the jurisdiction where the election is held.
- (4) (A) Beginning 10 days before the day of the election and continuing daily up to and including the fourth day before the election, for a minimum of eight hours per day, at least one vote center is provided for every 50,000 registered voters within the jurisdiction where the election is held, as



determined on the 88th day before the day of the election.

(B) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), for a jurisdiction with fewer than 50,000 registered voters, a minimum of two vote centers are provided within the jurisdiction where the election is held.

2017 Oklahoma Senate Bill 347 (Amends 26 Oklahoma Statutes § 14-115.4):

A. 2. The secretary of the county election board in counties with twenty-five thousand (25,000) or more registered voters, or with an area in excess of one thousand five hundred (1,500) square miles, may designate more than one location as an in person absentee polling place for an election, subject to the approval of and pursuant to the rules and procedures prescribed by the Secretary of the State Election Board.

New Mexico Statutes § 1-6-5.6 (2017)

The county clerk shall:

A. ensure that voters have adequate access to alternate voting locations for early voting in the county, taking into consideration population density and travel time to the location of voting;

B. ensure that early voters are not allowed to vote in person on election day;

C. ensure that adequate interpreters are available at alternate voting locations in those precincts having a majority of qualified electors who are part of a recognized language minority; and

D. based on rules adopted by the secretary of state, allow for mobile alternate voting locations in rural areas of the state that may be set up temporarily in specified precincts of the county during the period when early voting is allowed at alternate voting locations.

Secure Updates to Voter Registration Records

A smaller number of regional vote centers also enables more reliable electronic access to live database records and better-trained staff than traditional, dispersed precinct polling place models. This infrastructure is better prepared to handle registration updates or new registrations during the voting period. These database updates are kept safe from outside interference by setting up separate secure channels between vote centers and state hubs, such as virtual private networks (VPNs). A system for secure updates to voter registration records also provides cost and time savings on Election Day in the form of a dramatic decrease in provisional ballots cast. For example, Denver, Colorado, reduced the number of provisional ballots cast from 10,721 in the 2012 presidential election to just 340 in the 2016 presidential election, even though voters cast the highest number of ballots in Denver's history in 2016.

In order to update moves within and across local election jurisdiction boundaries, we recommend keeping registration addresses securely updated year-round through National Change of Address (NCOA) records and certain reliable government databases and agencies. However, voter registration officials should not rely upon federal immigration databases, which are often inaccurate. This approach modernizes voter registration databases to match voters' expectation that updating an address with one



government agency—such as the U.S. Postal Service or State Department of Revenue—will also update their information, including their voter records, with other government agencies. Colorado’s registration system checks change of address records monthly; local county clerks then send confirmation mailings to voters at new addresses in order to confirm registration addresses, without the voters having to file voter registration updates. Proactive updates to registration records also enhance security by decreasing the likelihood that a mail ballot will be delivered to the wrong address. Finally, as a backstop, states should implement emergency registration at voter centers for correcting last-minute deficiencies up to and including on Election Day.

Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-2-302.5 (2017)

(1) The secretary of state shall conduct a monthly national change of address search, using the national change of address database administered by the United States postal service, for all electors whose names appear in the statewide voter registration list.

(2) (a) The secretary of state shall transmit monthly to the appropriate county clerk and recorders the data obtained from the search conducted under subsection (1) of this section.

(b) If any search of the national change of address database administered by the United States postal service conducted under this section indicates an elector has permanently moved, the county clerk and recorder shall act as follows:

(I) (A) If the search indicates that the elector moved within the state, the county clerk and recorder of the county in which the elector’s new address is located shall mark the elector’s registration record as “Active” and update the elector’s registration record with the elector’s new address and send, to the elector’s old address, notice of the change by forwardable mail and a postage pre-paid pre-addressed return form by which the registrant may verify or correct the address information.

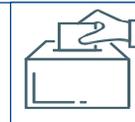
(B) If the elector returns the return form sent pursuant to sub-subparagraph (A) of this subparagraph (I) and indicates that he or she has not moved, the county clerk and recorder of the county in which the elector’s old address is located shall immediately correct the elector’s previously updated address in the statewide voter registration database.

(C) If the elector returns the return form confirming the new address, or if the elector does not return the return form, the county clerk and recorder shall leave the elector’s new address and status as updated in the registration record pursuant to sub-subparagraph (A) of this subparagraph (I).

(II) Repealed.

(III) If the search indicates that the elector moved to a different state, the county clerk and recorder shall mark the elector’s registration record “Inactive” and send a confirmation card and:

(A) If the elector returns the confirmation card and confirms the new address, the county clerk and recorder shall cancel the elector’s registration record in the statewide voter



registration database;

(B) If the elector does not return the confirmation card, the elector's registration record must remain "Inactive". If the inactive elector subsequently fails to vote in two consecutive general elections, the county clerk and recorder shall cancel the elector's registration record in accordance with section 1-2-605 (7).

(C) If the elector returns the confirmation card and indicates the elector has not moved, the county clerk and recorder shall immediately correct the elector's registration record in the statewide voter registration database and mark the voter "Active".

(c) A county clerk and recorder shall make corrections to address updates made pursuant to a national change of address search upon receiving additional information from the elector.

(3) Repealed.

(4) If any search conducted pursuant to this section indicates that an elector has added or changed a post office box, the county clerk and recorder shall update the elector's registration record with the new post office box as the elector's mailing address and send him or her a confirmation card in accordance with section 1-2-605. The card must notify the elector of the change in mailing address and apprise the elector of his or her place of residence for voting purposes.

(5) In addition to the search conducted by the secretary of state pursuant to subsection (1) of this section, a county clerk and recorder may conduct a national change of address search using the national change of address database administered by the United States postal service as frequently as he or she sees fit.

Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-2-217.5 (2012)

(1) Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 1-2-101 and 1-2-102, an elector may register to vote in an election after the registration books of the county clerk and recorder are closed for that election by completing an emergency registration affidavit as prescribed by the secretary of state if the elector:

(a) Appears in person at the primary office of the county clerk and recorder or at any office or location authorized by the county clerk and recorder and staffed by personnel authorized by the county clerk and recorder; and

(b) Complies with the requirements of section 1-2-204(1) and (2).

(c) (Deleted by amendment, L. 2003, p. 986, §1, effective April 17, 2003.)

(2) The elector shall declare under oath in the emergency registration affidavit that the elector wishes to register to vote in the election in the precinct and county for which the registration books are closed and that:

(a) Repealed.

(b) The elector applied to register to vote prior to the close of registration by federal postcard application or mail registration application;

(c) The elector applied to register to vote prior to the close of registration in a voter registration drive and is able either to show the receipt from the voter registration application that the elector submitted to the voter registration drive or to provide the location of the voter



registration drive and the approximate date of registration;

(d) The elector applied to register at a voter registration agency designated pursuant to the federal “National Voter Registration Act of 1993”, 42 U.S.C. sec. 1973gg, as amended, and is able to provide the name and location of and the approximate date of registration application at the agency; or

(e) The elector is a resident of this state who was an absent uniformed services elector serving outside the United States and was discharged from active duty or service within twenty-nine days prior to the election, moved to a new county of residence after the close of the registration books, and has not and will not cast a vote in the election in any other county or state.

...

(4) The elector shall subscribe to the oath before an officer authorized by law to administer oaths. Upon completion of the affidavit and the approval and qualification of the elector by the county clerk and recorder or other designated election official, the name of the elector shall be placed in the registration books or added to the list of eligible electors for the election for which the registration books were closed.

(5) An elector changing registration on an election day pursuant to this section may vote in the office of the county clerk and recorder or in the precinct where the new address is located. If the elector’s qualification to vote cannot be immediately established at the office of the county clerk and recorder, the elector may vote by provisional ballot.



Cybersecurity

With revelations of Russian hacking in the wake of the 2016 election, there is renewed interest in securing and hardening state vote counting and registration systems. It is critical that we secure our election systems from intrusion by foreign and domestic actors who would seek to interfere with our elections. It is imperative in a representative democracy that voters have confidence in their election process. Without that trust, participation would decrease and the legitimacy of the results would be in question. That is why states need to take legislative and regulatory action to secure our election systems. And some states are taking early steps to better prepare for these modern threats; for example, Maryland recently passed [2018 Maryland Senate Bill 281](#), which incorporates its election administration into the state's cybersecurity council. Legislators in California have introduced [2018 California Assembly Bill 3075](#) to create an office of elections cybersecurity within the office of the secretary of state, and [2018 California Assembly Bill 2748](#) provides for an independent cybersecurity assessment of its election system. While this area of policy is advancing and adapting quickly, it is also quite nascent, and pointing to statutory best practices will be less helpful at this juncture. Instead, it is important that state lawmakers work closely with their respected election officials to craft a policy specific to that state. More detail on this subject can be found in the hyperlinked February 2018 report, "[The State and Local Election Cybersecurity Playbook](#)," from the Defending Digital Democracy Project at the Belfer Center at the Harvard Kennedy School, but any new policy should work to:

- Ensure the confidentiality and integrity of all of the data state and local election authorities collect, maintain, receive, or transmit.
- Identify and protect against any anticipated threats to the security and integrity of that information, including impermissible uses or disclosures.
- Upgrade voter database infrastructure, including software and operating systems, to fortify defenses against cyberattack.
- Conduct a risk evaluation and implement security measures to address any risks to all databases and interfaces employed in the voter registration process.
- Conduct a screening that scans computers and networks for malware and other vulnerabilities.
- Conduct regular audits, either through a neutral third party or the state's audit agency, and risk management assessments, and pursue measures that are indicated as necessary.
- Employ available software to automatically detect anomalies and irregularities on an ongoing, frequent basis.
- Implement measures to ensure against unauthorized access or changes in data through the process of transmitting data from one agency to another.
- Develop procedures in the case of a breach of any kind to immediately address it, and appropriately inform the public and other necessary parties.
- Provide the highest level of physical security to facilities, computers, and other sensitive equipment.
- Train all workers who handle or have access to such data regarding implementation of the security protocols established.
- Maintain backup voter registration lists at the state and county levels at all times.



Other Provisions to Modernize Election Administration

Along with improved and expanded mail ballot delivery, vote center services, and voter registration updates and system upgrades, other complementary election administration features can be modernized to provide a better experience for voters, streamline processes, and enhance security and transparency. These include the following:

Ballot Tracking

The 2014 Bipartisan Presidential Commission on Election Reform identified best practices for mail ballot voting, including online tracking of ballots so that voters can verify the status and stage of processing. It is a best practice to include barcode information on the outside of the ballot package and the return mail envelope to facilitate tracking while maintaining voter privacy and ballot security. Barcode data is also easily scanned and processed at the U.S. Postal Service for ballots sent back by mail, as well as those retrieved from drop boxes or returned in person at vote centers. Some tracking systems also allow voter access through a secure web portal or by opting in to a text message alert during processing.

California Elections Code § 3017 (2017)

(c) ... the elections official shall establish procedures to track and confirm the receipt of voted vote by mail ballots and to make this information available by means of online access using the county's elections division Internet Web site. If the county does not have an elections division Internet Web site, the elections official shall establish a toll-free telephone number that may be used to confirm the date a voted vote by mail ballot was received.

Signature Verification

One consideration in ensuring the security and processing of mail ballots is defining a consistent statewide procedure for signature verification and the resolution of disputes. One important component includes having a database of signature samples to compare with ballot envelope signatures, such as voter registration forms, driver's license records, etc. Other elements include offering training for elections staff who will be comparing signatures, bipartisan resolution teams, and escalation procedures in cases where a signature match is disputed, and notice and opportunity to correct for any voter whose signature is flagged as deficient or missing before a decision is made not to count the ballot. Best practices include investing in technology that allows for online signature uploads and capturing electronic signatures from in person registrants. Technology built into some ballot scanning and sorting machines also provides the capability of signature verification and matching and can be relied upon as a first pass to narrow down the number of ballots requiring election administration staff review.

Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-7.5-107.3 (2017)

(1) (a) Except as provided in subsection (5) of this section, in every mail ballot election that is coordinated with or conducted by the county clerk and recorder, an election judge shall compare the signature on the self-affirmation on each return envelope with the signature of the eligible



elector stored in the statewide voter registration system in accordance with subsections (2), (3), and (4) of this section.

(2) (a) If, upon comparing the signature of an eligible elector on the self-affirmation on the return envelope with the signature of the eligible elector stored in the statewide voter registration system, the election judge determines that the signatures do not match, or if a signature verification device used pursuant to subsection (5) of this section is unable to determine that the signatures match, two other election judges of different political party affiliations shall simultaneously compare the signatures. If both other election judges agree that the signatures do not match, the county clerk and recorder shall, within three days after the signature deficiency has been confirmed, but in no event later than two days after election day, send to the eligible elector at the address indicated in the registration records a letter explaining the discrepancy in signatures and a form for the eligible elector to confirm that the elector returned a ballot to the county clerk and recorder. If the county clerk and recorder receives the form within eight days after election day confirming that the elector returned a ballot to the county clerk and recorder and enclosing a copy of the elector's identification as defined in section 1-1-104 (19.5), and if the ballot is otherwise valid, the ballot shall be counted. If the eligible elector returns the form indicating that the elector did not return a ballot to the county clerk and recorder, or if the eligible elector does not return the form within eight days after election day, the self-affirmation on the return envelope shall be categorized as incorrect, the ballot shall not be counted, and the county clerk and recorder shall send copies of the eligible elector's signature on the return envelope and the signature stored in the statewide voter registration system to the district attorney for investigation.

(b) An original return envelope with an enclosed secrecy envelope containing a voted ballot that is not counted in accordance with paragraph (a) of this subsection (2) shall be stored under seal in the office of the county clerk and recorder in a secure location separate from valid return envelopes and may be removed only under the authority of the district attorney or by order of a court having jurisdiction.

(c) In the case of a disagreement among the election judges as to whether the signature of an eligible elector on the self-affirmation on the return envelope matches the signature of the eligible elector stored in the statewide voter registration system pursuant to the procedures specified in paragraph (a) of this subsection (2), the signatures are deemed to match, and the election judge shall follow the procedures specified in section 1-7.5-107 (6) concerning the qualification and counting of mail ballots.

(3) If the election judge determines that the signature of an eligible elector on the self-affirmation matches the elector's signature stored in the statewide voter registration system, the election judge shall follow the procedures specified in section 1-7.5-107 (6) concerning the qualification and counting of mail ballots.

(4) (a) An election judge shall not determine that the signature of an eligible elector on the self-affirmation does not match the signature of that eligible elector stored in the statewide voter registration system solely on the basis of substitution of initials or use of a common nickname.



- (b) The county clerk and recorder shall provide training in the technique and standards of signature comparison to election judges who compare signatures pursuant to this section.*
- (5) (a) A county clerk and recorder may allow an election judge to use a signature verification device to compare the signature on the self-affirmation on a return envelope of an eligible elector's ballot with the signature of the elector stored in the statewide voter registration system in accordance with this subsection (5) and any rules promulgated by the secretary of state pursuant to subsection (6) of this section.*
- (b) If a signature verification device determines that the signature on the self-affirmation on a return envelope of an eligible elector's ballot matches the signature of the elector stored in the statewide voter registration system, the signature on the self-affirmation is deemed verified, and the election judge shall follow the procedures specified in section 1-7.5-107 (6) concerning the qualification and counting of mail ballots. If a signature verification device is unable to determine that the signature on the self-affirmation on a return envelope of an eligible elector's mail ballot matches the signature of the elector stored in the statewide voter registration system, an election judge shall compare the signatures in accordance with subsections (2), (3), and (4) of this section.*
- (6) The secretary of state shall adopt rules in accordance with article 4 of title 24, C.R.S., establishing procedures for using signature verification devices to process ballots used in mail ballot elections pursuant to this article.*

Utah Election Code, § 20A-3-308 (2017)

- (1) (a) Voting precinct poll workers shall open envelopes containing absentee ballots that are in their custody on election day at the polling places during the time the polls are open as provided in this Subsection (1).*
- (b) The poll workers shall:*
- (i) first, open the outer envelope only; and*
 - (ii) compare the signature of the voter on the application with the signature on the affidavit.*
- (2) (a) The poll workers shall carefully open and remove the absentee voter envelope so as not to destroy the affidavit on the envelope if they find that:*
- (i) the affidavit is sufficient;*
 - (ii) the signatures correspond; and*
 - (iii) the applicant is registered to vote in that voting precinct and has not voted in that election.*



COMMUNICATIONS AND MESSAGING

Background:

When talking about modernizing elections, there are some important things to keep in mind:

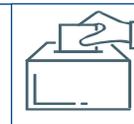
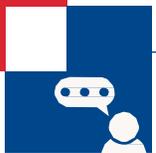
- As with most policy debates, be sure to outline the problem first. Then, when discussing the solution, focus on outcomes and benefits rather than the process.
- People believe that voting is one of our most fundamental freedoms and is the core of our democracy. As a result, people believe that voting should be both fair and accessible.
- Confidence in our election system has been shaken and the concerns are wide-ranging—from hacking and foreign interference to ineligible voting and fraud. Despite the lack of evidence of widespread voter fraud, we should not dismiss such concerns out of hand, but rather use the policy solution messaging to make the case that modernizing our election systems will safeguard the integrity and accuracy of our elections.
- People strongly support making voting accessible and fair, and removing barriers to voting for all eligible voters. They are particularly opposed to what can be perceived as politically motivated attacks on the right to vote.
- Election reforms receive bipartisan voter support. When talking about the impact of reforms, try to avoid falling into a partisan framework and talk about the benefits to all people—like parents working two jobs, rural and urban voters, seniors who cannot drive—not groups that are seen as base groups for either political party.

Topline Message:

As Americans, our right to vote is a responsibility and a privilege—and the integrity and fairness of our election system is important to us all. We can pass commonsense policies to update our election system so that more eligible Americans can register, vote, and have their voices heard, while also safeguarding our elections with mandatory audits and better technology to protect against hacking and tampering.

Talking Points:

- The right to vote is at the core of who we are as a nation, part of what makes America exceptional and keeps our democracy strong.
- We all care about the integrity and fairness of our election system, regardless of beliefs or political party.
- Safeguarding our elections doesn't happen through the exclusion of eligible voters—it happens when elections are fair, accessible, and accurate.
- Voting should be accessible for all eligible citizens, whether they're a parent working two jobs, a farmer who lives far away from the polls, a senior, or a military family who moves frequently or faces deployment.
- The commonsense policies that modernize our election systems protect the fundamental right of every eligible citizen to vote by making sure that their registration is accurate and up-to-date, and by making voting more accessible for all voters.



- These policies also safeguard our elections with mandatory audits and better technology to protect against foreign interference, hacking, and tampering.
- As Americans, voting is how we make our voices heard and take responsibility as citizens for the course our communities and country take—we deserve a fair and accountable system that works.

Supporting Facts:

It's important not to get bogged down with statistics and figures, but it is helpful to have some supporting facts to strengthen your message. Below are some helpful statistics to get you started:

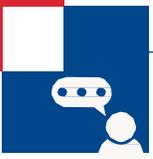
- Mail ballot delivery has profound implications to improve voter accessibility for the elderly and those with disabilities. According to the 2016 Survey of the Performance of American Elections, “33 percent of voters 70 years and older voted absentee, compared to 20 percent of voters in their thirties” and that “30 percent of voters with a disability that kept the voter ‘from participating fully in work, school, housework, or other activities’ voted absentee.”¹
- [In a 2018 survey](#) of Americans’ views of democracy and the political system, Pew Research Center found:
 - 90 percent of Americans believe it is very important that elections are free from tampering
 - 83 percent of Americans believe it is very important that no eligible voters are denied the right to vote
 - 91 percent of Americans believe it is either very (74 percent) or somewhat (17 percent) important to vote in elections in order to be a good citizen
- Voting machines in use in many states are so outdated the companies that made them are out of business.² In addition, many machines do not provide a paper trail to review to know how votes are counted.
- Participation in our democracy is critical. Every Election Day, tens of thousands of eligible, responsible citizens are not able to exercise their constitutional right to vote. That’s because at least one in four eligible voters is not registered.
- In 2016, the six states with the highest voter turnout were also states that offered Same Day Registration (SDR). And, on average, voter turnout is seven points higher in states where SDR is available.
- According to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, in 2016, over 50 percent of voters cast their ballots early, by mail, or via absentee voting in 16 states. Colorado, Oregon, and Washington have the highest rates of using these methods because each state administers ballots by mail. Over 50 percent of votes were cast as absentee ballots in these states: Arizona, California, Florida, Hawaii, Montana, and Utah. In seven states, over 50 percent of votes were cast early: Arkansas, Georgia, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas³. The number of U.S. citizens voting early more than doubled from nearly 10.2 million early ballots cast in 2004 to 24.1 million early ballots cast

¹ “2016 Survey of the Performance of American Elections, Final Report,” Charles Stewart III, The Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

² https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/publications/Americas_Voting_Machines_At_Risk.pdf

https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/america-continues-to-ignore-the-risks-of-election-hacking/amp?twitter_impression=true

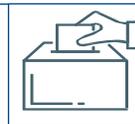
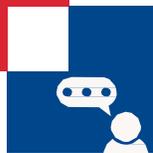
³ U.S. Election Assistance Commission. “EAVS Deep Dive: Early, Absentee and Mail Voting” October 2017. <https://www.eac.gov/documents/2017/10/17/eavs-deep-dive-early-absentee-and-mail-voting-data-statutory-overview/>



in 2016.

- Modernizing election systems saves money:
 - Delaware’s paperless voter registration at Department of Motor Vehicle locations saves election officials more than \$200,000 on personnel costs annually.
 - Electronic registrations saved Maricopa County in Arizona more than \$450,000 in 2008. More information on this effort can be found in the Brennan Center for Justice’s report, “Voter Registration in a Digital Age”.⁴ The county spends an average of just 3¢ to process applications received electronically through the DMV or online, compared to 83¢ for a paper registration form. More on this can be found in a report from the Washington Institute of the Study of Ethnicity and Race, “Online Voter Registration (OLVR) Systems in Arizona and Washington: Evaluating Usage, Public Confidence, and Implementation Processes.”
 - Modernizing elections systems reduces the number of provisional ballots, which cost almost \$4.00 per ballot to count. The city of Denver, Colorado, estimated the cost savings from reduced provisional ballots to be approximately \$30,000 in the 2012 election alone. Estimated savings statewide is over \$200,000.

⁴ “Voter Registration in a Digital Age: 2015 Update”. <https://www.brennancenter.org/publication/voter-registration-digital-age-2015-update>



Opposition Messaging And Responses:

Opposition Message 1:

Millions of people illegally voted in the 2016 election, so we need stricter voter ID rules, not ways to make it easier to vote.

Sample Response: While President Trump made the allegation that 5 million people illegally voted to explain his loss of the popular vote in the 2016 election, his Advisory Commission on Election Integrity, appointed in May 2017, dissolved without finding any actual evidence of voter fraud.

Modernizing our election system will make it more secure and more accessible. Many of the advances in data and technology that have changed the ways we live have not been applied to the ways we vote. We can pass some commonsense policies to update our election system so that more eligible Americans can register, vote, and have their voices heard, while also safeguarding our elections with mandatory audits and better technology to protect against hacking and tampering.

Opposition Message 2:

Modernizing our election systems is expensive. Shouldn't we spend that money on more urgent priorities?

Sample Response: Modernizing our election systems actually saves money. For example, it will reduce the number of provisional ballots, which cost almost \$4.00 per ballot to count. The city of Denver, Colorado, estimated the cost savings from reduced provisional ballots to be approximately \$30,000 in the 2012 election alone. Estimated savings statewide is over \$200,000.

Opposition Message 3:

I vote in every election. It's not that inconvenient. Why do we need to make it more accessible?

Sample Response: It's not always easy to get to a polling location with limited hours on Election Day. This is true for parents working two jobs, workers with unpredictable schedules, seniors who aren't able to drive or stand in line for an extended period of time, voters who live far from a polling location, or military personnel who may be deployed.

Having access to early voting or the ability to vote by mail can remove barriers to voting while safeguarding the integrity and accuracy of our elections.



Sample Social Media Content:

Below are some sample tweets you can adapt for your own use:

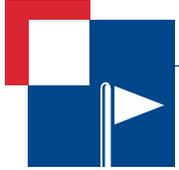
- [Insert number] days out from the next election and our voting systems are still outdated & vulnerable to hacking. Time to modernize. We must demand #PaperBallots #VOTE
- You can't hack #PaperBallots. Time to demand modern elections in [STATE]

Best tested technology? #SnailMail. Demand #PaperBallots

- What's worse than waiting in line? Demand #PaperBallots #[STATE]Votes
- Worried about #CyberSecurity and the next election? Time to #UnHacktheVote, modernize [STATE]'s election systems, and switch to #PaperBallots
- #[Bill name] will protect our democracy, make our elections more accessible to all voters and ensure every voice is heard #GOTV
- Every American deserves their voice to be heard on #ElectionDay. #[Bill name] makes sure there's a paper trail so we know every #vote is counted.

Hashtags to choose from: #Vote, #PaperBallots, #UnHacktheVote, #VoteByMail, #Cybersecurity, #[STATE]Votes, #ElectionsMatter, #GOTV, #VotingMatters, #UVBM, #AVR

- Note: Additional hashtags may be trending in your area and at different times.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Fact Sheets, Reports, and Policy Briefs

- Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, “[The State and Local Election Cybersecurity Playbook](#)” (February 2018)
- Bipartisan Policy Center, “[The New Realities of Voting by Mail in 2016](#)” (June 2016)
- Brennan Center for Justice, “[How to Fix Long Lines](#)” (February 2013)
- Brennan Center for Justice, “[Making the List: Database Matching and Verification Process for Voter Registration](#)” (March 2006)
- Brennan Center for Justice, “[Voting Laws Roundup 2017](#)” (May 2017)
- Center for American Progress, “[9 Solutions to Secure America’s Elections](#)” (August 2017)
- Common Cause, “[Tuning In & Turning Out: Millenials are active but not voting; what’s stopping them and how can they make their voices count?](#)” (September 2016)
- Demos, “[Millions to the Polls: Practical Policies to Fulfill the Freedom to Vote for All Americans](#)” (February 2014)
- Demos, “[How States Can Protect Voters While Keeping Their Voter Rolls Up to Date](#)” (February 2017)
- Fair Elections Legal Network, “[Saving Votes: An Easy Fix to the Problem of Wasting Provisional Ballots Cast Out of Precinct](#)” (February 2014)
- Pew Charitable Trusts, “[Use of Vote Centers on the Rise Nationwide](#)” (January 2015)
- Pew Charitable Trusts, “[Colorado Voting Reforms: Early Results](#)” (March 2016)

Exemplary Legislation

Arizona

- [Arizona Revised Statutes § 16-542 \(2017\)](#)
- [Arizona Revised Statutes § 16-544 \(2017\)](#)

California

- [California Elections Code § 4103 \(2017\)](#)
- [California Elections Code § 3017 \(2017\)](#)
- [California Elections Code § 4005 \(2017\)](#)
- [2017 California Assembly Bill 216](#)
- [2018 California Assembly Bill 2748](#)
- [2018 California Assembly Bill 3075](#)

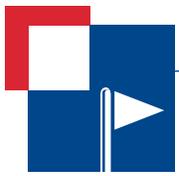
Colorado

- [Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-2-201 \(2017\)](#)
- [Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-2-217.5 \(2012\)](#)
- [Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-2-302.5 \(2017\)](#)
- [Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-5-102.9 \(2017\)](#)
- [Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-5-401 \(2017\)](#)
- [Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-7.5-103 \(2017\)](#)
- [Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-7.5-107 \(2017\)](#)
- [Colorado Revised Statutes § 1-7.5-107.3 \(2017\)](#)

Maryland

- [2018 Maryland Senate Bill 281](#)

Montana



Montana Code Annotated § 13-13-212 (2017)

New Mexico

New Mexico Statutes § 1-6-5.6 (2017)

North Dakota

North Dakota Century Code 16.1-11.1-01 (2017)

Oklahoma

2017 Oklahoma Senate Bill 347

Oregon

Oregon Revised Statutes § 254.470 (2017)

Oregon Secretary of State Vote by Mail
Procedures Manual (2015)

Utah

Utah Election Code § 20A-3-306 (2017)

Utah Election Code, § 20A-3-308 (2017)

Washington

Revised Code of Washington § 29A.40.010
(2017)

Revised Code of Washington § 29A.40.160
(2017)