

Securing the 2020 Election: Absentee ballots

October 16, 2020

Outline

- Security checks on absentee voting
- The absentee voting wars
- In-person voter intimidation



The life of an absentee ballot: Steps and security measures

VOTER REGISTRATION

- Identifying info, signature
- Sworn statement



BALLOT APPLICATION

- Identifying info match
- Sworn statement
- Signature match



BLANK BALLOT MAILED

- Unique barcode linking to voter



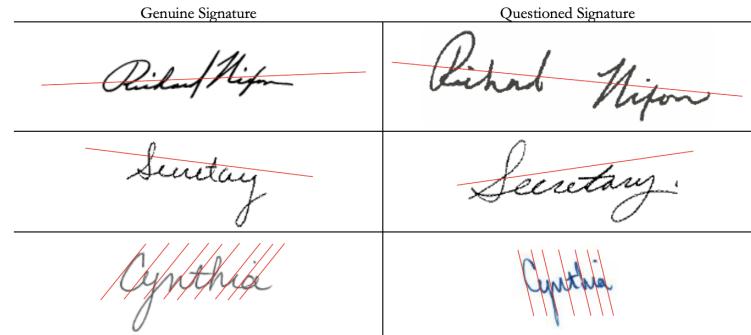
VOTER COMPLETION AND RETURN

- Sworn statement
- Signature match



BALLOT IS PROCESSED

- Paper weight check
- Barcode check
- Signature check



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- Impossible to (except in the case of major error by officials):
 - Print and mail fake ballots
 - Vote twice
- An individual committing voter fraud would have to:
 - Make (possibly multiple) false attestations
 - Know information about other specific voters
 - Put themselves at risk of severe penalties



Fraud vs. disqualification

Authentication vs. enfranchisement

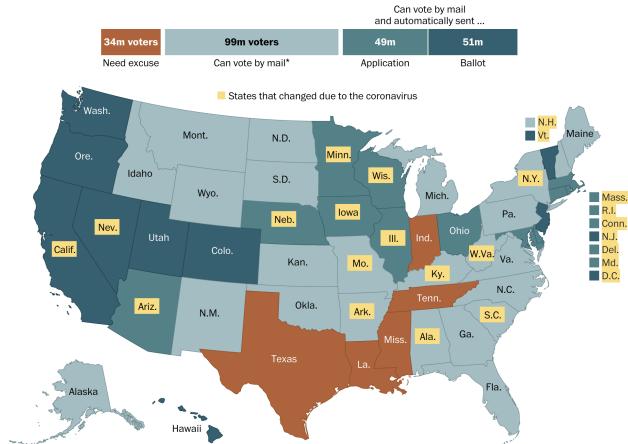
- 145 criminal convictions of absentee ballot fraud over the last 20 years, out of 250 million ballots cast by mail
 - 0.00006 percent of all ballots
- 425K absentee ballots were disqualified in 2018, out of 30.4M ballots cast
 - 1.4 percent of all ballots

Top Reasons for Rejecting By-Mail Ballots	
Reason	Percentage of Rejected Ballots
“Other” reason given	34.9%
Ballot not received on time/missed deadline	26.9%
Non-matching signature	15.8%
No voter signature	13.0%
No witness signature	2.5%
All additional reasons	2.2%
Voter already voted in person	1.4%

*The Heritage Foundation’s Election Fraud Database;
Election Assistance Commission, Election Administration and Voting Survey, 2018.*



Loosening restrictions vs. weaponizing restrictions



- Ballot and ballot application mailings
- Deadlines
- Drop off points
- Witness(es)/notary signature requirements
- Signature verification
- Notification-and-cure processes

Court blocks extension of Wisconsin absentee ballot deadline

Appeals court allows Texas governor's mail ballot drop-off restrictions to stay in place

Supreme Court restores witness signature rule for absentee ballots in South Carolina

'Naked ballots,' explained: In Pennsylvania, new court ruling complicates mail-in voting



In-person voter intimidation

- Poll-watching
- Voter caging
- “Army for Trump”





THANK YOU | CDT.ORG

