

We will be counted: PWN Votes By Mail!



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Logistics

- This meeting is being recorded
- We are in webinar mode on zoom, all attendees are muted. Please raise the hand icon if you would like to make a comment.
- Feel free to ask questions in the Q and A box,



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Presenters



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Objectives

1. Understand how Vote by Mail can expand access to voting
2. Learn about common challenges and opportunities to improve Vote by Mail
3. Understand how to implement a vote by mail drive or advocacy effort in your area
4. Get involved!



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Agenda

Welcome and Introduction

Why Vote by Mail?

Understand vote by mail landscape

- State of Play
- Opportunities
- Challenges

Case Studies: How did VBM go in the GA and PA primaries?

What you can do



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About Positive Women's Network-USA

The only national organization in the US led **by** and **for** women and trans people living with HIV

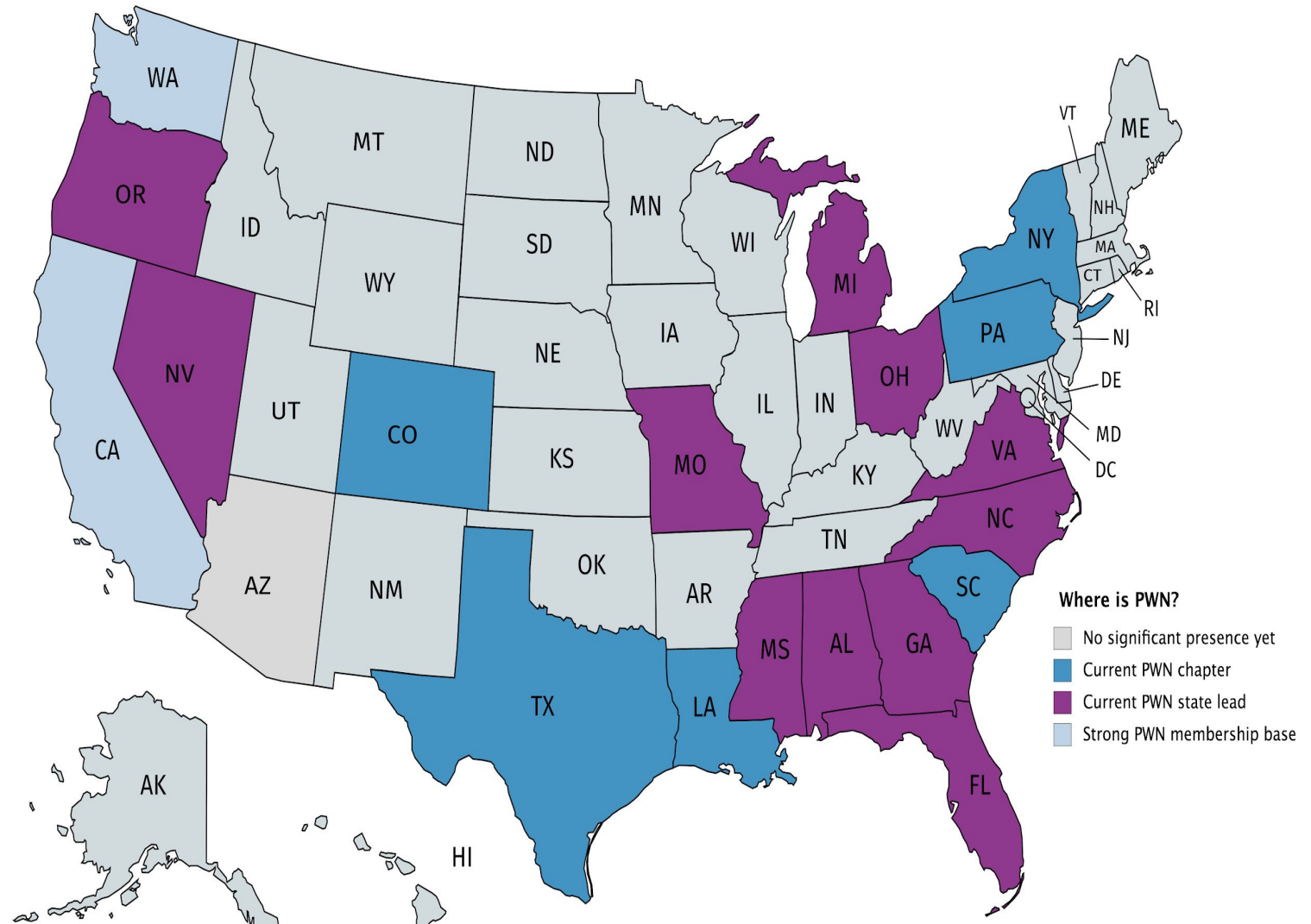
Mission: To *prepare and involve* women living with HIV, in all our diversity, in all levels of policy and decision-making.



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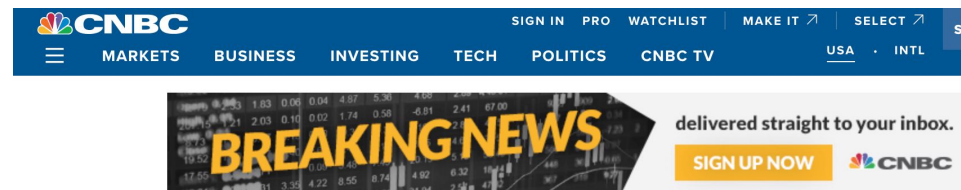
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Election 2020: Because we know what's at stake



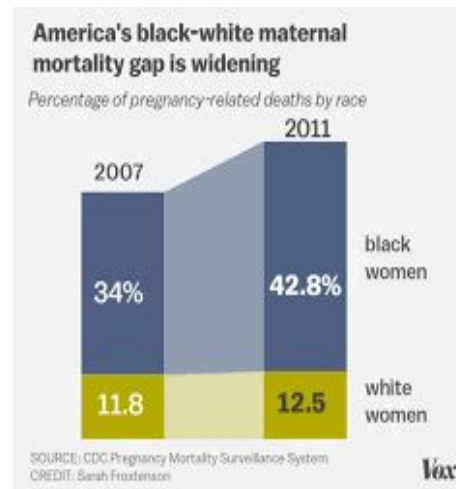
Trans*
rights
are
human
rights



HEALTH AND SCIENCE

Trump praises scientists for developing AIDS vaccine that doesn't exist

PUBLISHED TUE, JUN 16 2020 4:30 PM EDT



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FLEX! Elections have consequences



San Francisco DA Chesa Boudin ends cash bail for all criminal cases



Evan Sernoffsky

Jan. 22, 2020

Updated: Jan. 29, 2020 8:43 a.m.



Forbes

Minneapolis City Council Unanimously Votes To Replace Police With Community-Led Model

The Minneapolis City Council on Friday, 18 days after the death of George Floyd, unanimously passed a resolution to replace the police ...

1 day ago



9News.com KUSA

Denver school board unanimously votes to pull DPD officers out of schools

DENVER — The Denver Public Schools (DPS) Board of Education has ... go to school without the looming threat and fear of the police there to ...

2 days ago



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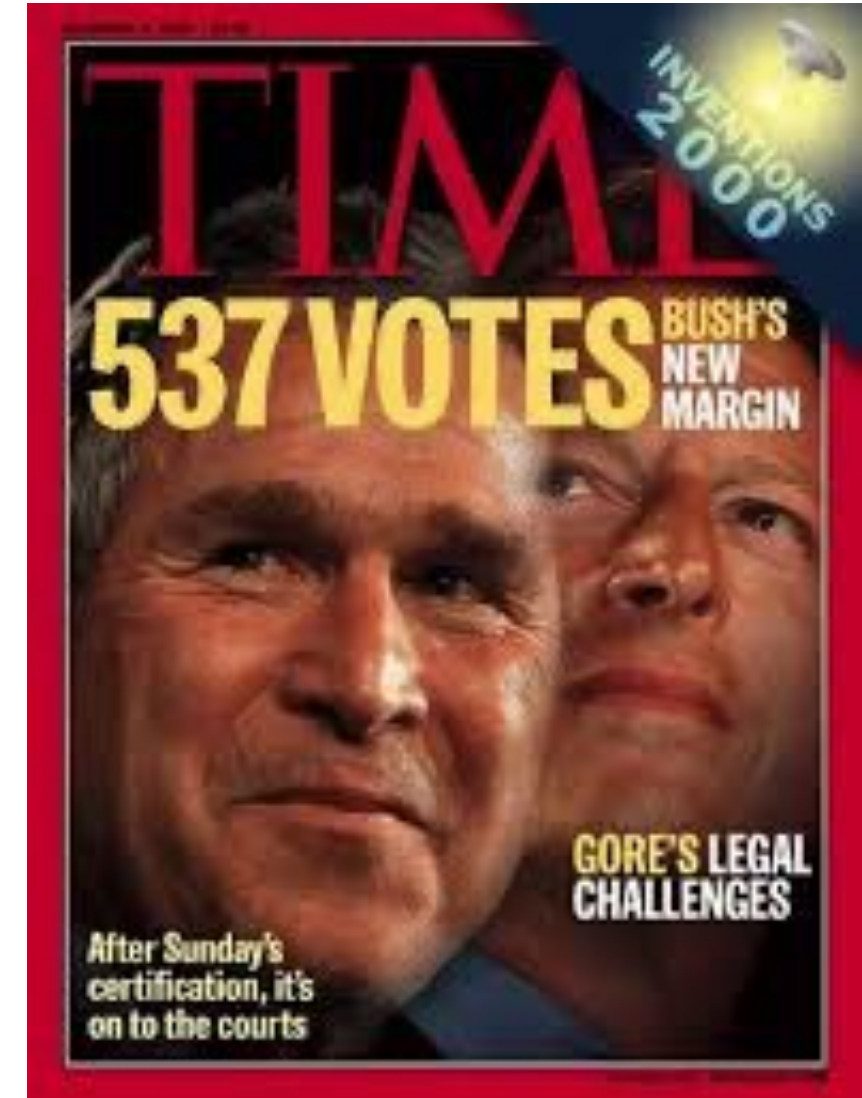
1.1 million

people living with HIV in the United States



The Election Came Down to 77,744 Votes in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Michigan (Updated)

by John McCormack, Senior Writer | November 10, 2016 03:13 PM



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BUT...



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Georgia shows why November's election could be chaos

Coronavirus and voting-technology glitches led to hours-long waits for voters.

TIMOTHY B. LEE - 6/16/2020, 4:00 AM

2020 ELECTIONS

Florida Among Group of States Seeing Decline in Voter Registration

BY MITCH PERRY | FLORIDA

PUBLISHED 5:39 PM ET JUN. 16, 2020

Covid-19 Changed How We Vote. It Could Also Change Who Votes.

In presidential election years, state driver licensing offices and registration drives generate a torrent of new voters. The pandemic has cut that to a trickle.

BREAKING | 1,209 views | Jun 15, 2020, 12:03pm EDT

As Coronavirus Infections Surge Nationwide, Threats Rise Of New Shutdowns, Election Disruptions



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Definitions: What does vote by mail mean?

Vote by mail (VBM) is a way for voters to cast their ballots without going to a polling place in person.

- ▣ It's a *catch-all term* for lots of ways people can vote without showing up at the polling place.
- ▣ It does not usually replace in-person voting; it provides an additional option.
- ▣ Every state has different laws on who can vote by mail and how. Some counties have their own laws!
- ▣ *In some places, laws for November 2020 are currently in flux.*



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Why Push Vote By Mail?

- States with low-barrier vote by mail have higher voter turnout
- Safer in a pandemic!
- Long lines at polling places
- Better for voters with disabilities
- Voters can more easily research what's on their ballot
- Increases participation in down ballot races
- It can be hard to get to polling places on Election Day

ANALYSIS

Americans of All Stripes Want a Mail Ballot Option



As the president wages a disinformation campaign against mail voting, nearly 80 percent of Americans want a mail ballot option this November.



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Just this week!

Attention Warren County voters: You're voting by mail in N.J.'s July 7 primary. Here's how.

Posted Jun 15, 6:14 PM

POLITICS

Governor Signs Bill to Expand Vote-By-Mail Amid Pandemic

Heather Cherone | June 16, 2020 3:50 pm

ILLINOIS

CNN politics Donald Trump Supreme Court Congress Facts First 2020 Election

• LIVE TV Edition 

Texas Democrats ask US Supreme Court to weigh in on vote-by-mail expansion

By Kelly Mena, CNN

Updated 5:16 PM ET, Tue June 16, 2020



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Current State of Play



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We can't go through every single county and state on this webinar...

... But we can talk about general trends, some case studies, and strategies.



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States

- **Universal Vote by Mail States:**
 - CO, HI, OR, UT, WA
- **No Excuse Required Absentee Ballots:**
 - CA, NV, ID, MT, WY, ND, SD, MN, WI, IA, IL, KS, OK, AZ, NM, AK, MI, OH, PA, VT, ME, RI, NJ, DC, VA, NC, GA, FL
- **Excuse Required Absentee Ballots:**
 - TX, MO, AR, LA, MS, AL, TN, KY, IN, WV, SC, NY, NH, MA, CT, DE



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Diving a little deeper

All Mail Voting ballots are automatically mailed to every eligible voter

Absentee Ballots ballots are mailed to voters who request one

"**No Excuse**" absentee ballots- qualified voters may request an absentee ballot without an excuse

"**Excuse required**" ballots- qualified voters must have an accepted excuse to request an absentee ballot

- ❑ In some places that require an excuse, it's contested whether COVID-19 will qualify as an acceptable excuse



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General truths about VBM

- In most places with VBM, voters have to **actively request** a VBM ballot (*exceptions: Oregon and Colorado*)
- There is a **deadline** to request VBM ballots
- **VBM ballots are mailed several weeks before the election.** This means people start voting several weeks before the election. E.g. in California, usually more than 60% of voters have voted before the polls open on Election Day. **This changes GOTV strategies.**
- **VBM is new for a lot of people** so education and outreach are required.



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Common Concerns and Rebuttals

But vote by mail is new! **NO IT'S NOT**

- Roughly 25% of voters cast a mail ballot in the last two federal elections.
- Mail balloting is the primary means of voting in CO, HI, OR, WA, and UT. 28 additional states allow no-excuse mail balloting.
- In 2018, more than 31 million Americans, 25.8% of election participants, cast their vote by mail.

But what about fraud? **THERE'S NO EVIDENCE THAT VBM LEADS TO MORE FRAUD**

- From 2000-2012, only 491 cases of absentee ballot fraud, out of billions of votes cast
(<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/false-narrative-vote-mail-fraud>)



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Know the Safeguards

Bar Codes

- Allow election officials to keep track of ballot processing and help voters know whether their ballot has been received.
- Allow states to identify and eliminate duplicate ballots if a voter casts more than one.

Ballot Tracking via USPS

- Bar codes linked to USPS enable voters and election officials to track an envelope from drop-off to delivery and processing.

Identity Verification

- The mail ballot envelope itself.
- Signature match with voter roll.



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But VBM can be improved. We want:

1. “No excuse” vote by mail options.
2. Postage should be free or prepaid.
3. Increase drop-off sites and times for VBM ballots.
4. Allow community organizations to help collect and deliver voted and sealed ballots.
5. Allow ballots to be submitted through election day.
6. No witness requirement for Absentee Voting.
7. Reform signature matching laws to protect voters.

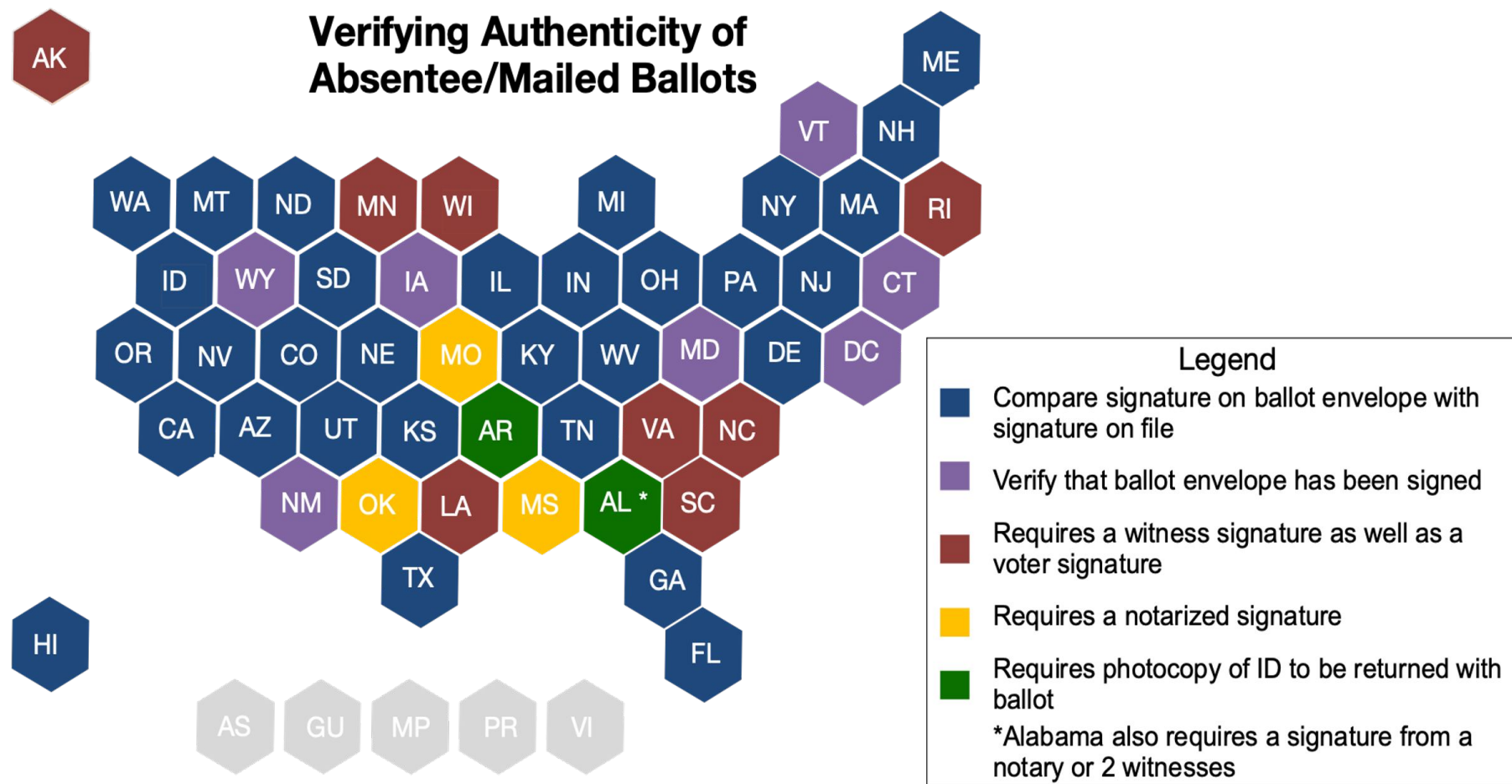


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How To Make Vote By Mail Better



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Vote by Mail isn't everywhere. If you must vote in person during the pandemic, take precautions!

- **Try to Vote Early**
 - Fewer crowds, fewer lines.
 - Follow COVID-19 safety procedures
- **Vote on Election Day**
 - Try to vote at a time of day when your precinct is less likely to be crowded. This is often early morning or mid-afternoon.
 - Follow COVID-19 safety procedures.



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Federal Steps to Expand Vote by Mail



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Federal Responses

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)

- \$400 million in new Help America Vote Act (HAVA) emergency funds.
- Funds distributed by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC).
- Funds must be used *“to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus, domestically or internationally, for the 2020 Federal election cycle.”*



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Federal Responses

Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act (HEROES Act)

- Allocates \$3.6 billion for state and local governments to make their election systems safe for voters and poll workers under pandemic conditions.



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Federal Responses

Natural Disaster and Emergency Ballot Act (NDEBA)

- Introduced by Sen. Klobuchar and Sen. Wyden.
- Voters have 20 days of early voting in all states.
- Requires all mail-in ballots submitted during the 21 days leading to an election be counted.
- Ensure that all voters have the option to request absentee ballots.



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State Responses: Case Studies in Action



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Case Study: On the Ground in Georgia. Primary day June 9, 2020



NBC News

Voter turnout soared in Georgia despite massive primary day problems

While primary day was marred by long lines, problems with voting machines and a lack of ballots, mail-in voting led to extremely high turnout in ...

1 day ago



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Case Study: Pennsylvania

SNAPSHOT OF THE LAW

- Absentee ballot (must have an excuse)
- Mail-in ballot (no excuse needed but must apply online or via mail). Must be a registered voter to apply for mail-in ballot.
- Mail ballot requests must be received 7 days before election by 5pm EST
- No ID or witness requirements
- Voter pays postage
- Mail in ballots must be received by the time the polls close



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Getting out the Vote in Pennsylvania

Let's vote, PA!

Pennsylvania! Our primary election is **Tuesday June 2** and for the first time ever, all Pennsylvanians have the right to vote by mail. This is important! Only 20% of polling places will be open on June 2, so voting by mail is a great option to save you time and also ensure you are safe from coronavirus. You must submit your mail-in ballot request by **5pm on Tuesday May 26**. We know this can be confusing so here is some info for you about voting by mail:

* Complete the vote by mail application form ASAP at

<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/OnlineAbsenteeApplication/#!/OnlineAbsenteeBegin>

Tell us about how you plan to vote and if you need any support below!



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What advocates can do: advocacy

1. **Know** your vote by mail, absentee voter, and early voting laws
2. **Advocate** to improve them
3. Talk to election officials about **improving access:**
 - eg additional drop off locations and times
4. **Look into and advocate for harm reduction options:** eg expanding early voting in person times and dates means less people at the polls



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What advocates can do: organizing

Educate voters about their vote by mail options; encourage them to re-register to vote by mail

Run a VBM drive or advocacy campaign:

- Have a way for your clients, constituents, community members to register to vote by mail.
- If you don't have VBM, talk to your elections folks about it! It's not too late to make changes before November.
- Give away stamps for mail-in ballots
- Collect and drop off ballots if allowable

Post on social media #PWNVotesByMail



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Discussion and Questions

- **What steps can you take to expand vote by mail in your community?**



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Additional Resources

Movement Advancement Project report: *Making Vote by Mail work for everyone* (June 2020)

<http://www.mapresearch.org/vote-by-mail>

Nonprofit VOTE- Voting In Your State

<https://www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state/>



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Conclusion



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Thank you!

For additional questions on advocating for vote by mail please contact:

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