

CO-PRESIDENTS LETTER

Dear League Members,

There is the old saw, every vote counts. This election gives proof to that adage. As you read this letter, the outcome in some states may still be unknown or in dispute. Because of the close number of votes each candidate received, Georgia's results now lead to a January runoff in the two contests for the Senate. These two seats will determine the majority in the Senate and the success of President-elect Biden's agenda.



U.S. registered voters represent a much smaller share of potential voters, 64% in 2016, than many other countries. The good news is that in this 2020 election more voters cast ballots than any time in American history. According to AP news, *the sheer number of votes also set records... so far 148 million votes have been tallied, with Democrat Joe Biden winning more than 75 million — the highest number for a presidential candidate in history. Trump received more than 70 million — the highest total for a losing candidate.*¹

The League of Women Voters worked hard to contribute to this historic record. Here in Baltimore County we devoted our activities leading up to November 3rd to voter registration, voter education, and to voting integrity. We have more work to do. Looking at the voter turnout data in Maryland, of the 4,109,762 registered voters, a total of 2,169,942 or 52.8% voted. In Baltimore County there are 566,408 registered voters of whom 268,535 voted or 47.4%. Of Maryland's 23 Counties and Baltimore City, 15 counties recorded a higher turnout percentage than that of Baltimore County. As we look forward, we will strive to improve our county's performance.²

In that spirit, we published and distributed 37,750 Voters' Guides including a Guide to every newly registered voter and all LWV Baltimore County members. We published an ad in the Baltimore Sun aimed at educating voters on how to file early by mail, how to vote in person and how to register. We used social media to further educate and urge viewers to vote.

On November 29 we continue a League study of voting by mail. This past election clearly illustrated the utility, advantages, and trend for more and more states to encourage this alternative to voting in person. Four states already use a standard state-wide method of voting. The study fact sheet included in this newsletter notes "Stanford University Democracy & Polarization Lab suggests that, on average, turnout runs about 2-3 percent higher (analyzing multiple types of elections and over time)." We urge each of you to participate in the scheduled discussions of the Vote by Mail study as it will continue to be discussed and potentially adopted by many states, including Maryland.

Over the past election season, many of our members deserve recognition and thanks for their above and beyond contributions encouraging informed voting in this last election. They include Barbara Crain, the chairman of our Voter Services Committee, Caroline Seamon and Stacey Morrison for Voters' Guide

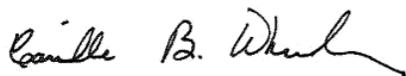
¹ RICCARDI, N. (2020, November 9). <https://apnews.com/article/referendum-on-trump-shatter-voter-record-c5c61a8d280123a1d340a3f633077800> Click to copy RELATED TOPICS Election 2020 Joe Biden Donald Trump Politics AP Top News Barack Obama Elections Voting Presidential Elections Referendum on Trump shatters turnout records. Retrieved from <https://apnews.com/article/referendum-on-trump-shatter-voter-record-c5c61a8d280123a1d340a3f633077800>

² Recent Releases and Statistics. Maryland State Board of Elections. https://elections.maryland.gov/press_room/index.html.

assistance, Sue and Joe Garonzik for making the Sun advertisement happen, volunteers who staffed each registration center, and those of you who contributed to funding and distributing the Voters' Guide.

Sincerely,

Co-Presidents Camille Wheeler Tana Hamilton




Editor's note: Learn more about the 2020 Presidential Election results. The Maryland State Board of Elections posts all data (raw and organized) on their website, https://elections.maryland.gov/press_room/index.html.

LWVUS

LWV STATEMENT ON THE 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS



DR. DEBORAH TURNER,
PRESIDENT LWV



VIRGINIA CASE,
LWV CEO

11/7/2020 WASHINGTON – League of Women Voters board president **Dr. Deborah Turner** and CEO **Virginia Kase** issued the following joint statement on the results of the electoral college count for our next president:

“The American voters have spoken, and we now know the result of the presidential election. We commend the election workers and administrators who helped facilitate the 2020 elections and the post-Election Day counting of ballots under the most challenging of circumstances.

“The 2020 elections saw the most ballots cast in U.S. history. We applaud the will and determination of the American public to participate in elections amid an ongoing pandemic. This unprecedented turnout is a testament to the determination of the American voters and the strength of our democratic system. It is also a testament to the tenacity and power of Black, Indigenous, Latino, Asian, Muslim, LGBTQ+, and young voters who turned out in record numbers demanding their voices be heard. We are truly inspired.

“Voting is our most sacred constitutional right, and elections are our greatest national project. While we know the outcome of the presidential election, there are still hundreds of local and state races yet to be decided. As we await the full results, we respect the process and professionalism of our election administrators. When all votes are counted, all candidates must respect the outcome.

“There will be many lessons learned from the 2020 elections, and we should celebrate our successes, including the expansion of voter access, record-breaking early voting, and the wide-scale use of absentee and mail-in voting options. This is what creating a more perfect union looks like, and we hope to see these expansions become a more permanent part of our voting system.

“The League’s work this year informed and protected millions of voters. The League was instrumental in the ongoing fight to preserve American democracy in a nonpartisan manner even in one of the most partisan and contentious elections in our nation’s history. One hundred years after our organization was founded, we remain committed to our mission of empowering voters and defending democracy.

“As we look to the weeks and months ahead, our nation must begin the process of reconciliation and seek to identify those things that bind us together rather than divide us. In this moment, we must come together as Americans, respect the process, and work toward a peaceful transition of power.

“Democracy defines America, and democracy has prevailed in the 2020 elections.”

COMMITTEES AND REPORTS

OUR NEWEST BOARD MEMBER

Ericka McDonald has been working as membership chair since early summer and has recently been voted in as a board member. You may have spoken with her recently as she has been extremely busy conversing with new members and volunteers finding the right fit to help each become active leaguers.



Ericka’s interest in the Baltimore County LWV stems from her belief that functional democracy requires equal access to the polls and information for all citizens. To erase barriers to participation in the voting process requires ongoing action and education to expose, tear down, and negate these efforts. Her graduate degree in library science and librarians focus of equal free access to information, makes Erika a perfect board member to further this essential action of promoting free and equal access to voting. Erika has two teenage children, one of whom recently excitedly registered to vote. She also volunteers at their magnets school and within the Catonsville community.

Her energy and involvement do not end there. Her interest in gardening, modern art, and traveling add to her being a renaissance woman. As an avid reader she enjoys science fiction and philosophy. What no one knows about Ericka: She has been to Lake Atitlan in Guatemala!

Contact Ericka, elmc@lwvbaltimorecounty.org, to volunteer or learn more about league membership.

ADVOCACY

STUDENT SUPPORT NETWORK - PEACE OF MIND CAMPAIGN

LWV Baltimore County continues to address food insecurity for Baltimore County families in need by supporting the Student Support Network. The Student Support Network improves the lives of Baltimore County students living in poverty by providing food, other basic necessities, and advocacy support. On November 19, 2020, 7 p.m. they will host a webinar on the Topic, **Bring Peace of Mind in Troubled Times.**



The Network, along with Co-Moderators Tracey Myers-Preston and Michael Preston, will host a panel of speakers to learn about the increasing and challenging crisis at hand and community strategies we can put to work. This event has been rescheduled for Wednesday, November 18th at 7:00 pm.

Register for the event at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_fy8GafQCRXSoWHDICn5U-A?fbclid=IwAR1Yk55tjT47ANp42SOBspxeQRqd7htJiOBK9B9fFYa_5aQ5MgbN-I26xUg

COMMUNICATIONS

THE HANDBOOK IS COMING

It really is. After a few minor delays, the *Handbook and Directory* was mailed Tuesday, November 10. It contains much helpful league information to guide our mission. The updated bylaws, committees and board members will help us stay connected.

As you review it, consider ways you can volunteer or strengthen our league and its presence in Baltimore County. If you don’t receive yours, please call the office to make sure your membership is up to date.

VOTERS' SERVICE

2020 ELECTION VOTERS' GUIDES LWV Baltimore County

Totals

- printed: 37,750 copies
- Mailing Costs \$6,000
- Total cost: approximately \$9,600 – (under budget and includes mailing costs)

Voters' Guide Teamwork

- 2+ volunteers prepared contacted candidates and collated pages for printing
- 2+ members helped with proof-reading
- 7 people helped with deliveries
- 6 000 guides were distributed through Baltimore County Public Library
- 28,200 were distributed by mail
- 28,000 to new voters in Baltimore County
- 200 to our members

remaining copies distributed in our community, senior living facilities

Production and distribution of the Guides would not have been possible without Caroline Seamon, as well as Sue and Joe Garonzik, Jen Haire, Phyl Lansing, Anne Libis, Ericka McDonald, Ralph Rigger, Margie Simon, and Beverly Winter.

LEARNING HOW TO VOTE IN 2020: LWV BALTIMORE COUNTY MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Sue Garonzik

The Corona Virus pandemic posed an unprecedented problem for Maryland voters leading up to the 2020 elections. To protect the health of the public, the Maryland Board of elections established a modified system affecting how, when, and where voters would cast their ballots. In an effort to educate the voters in Baltimore County about the new arrangements, our league worked with *The Sun* to create an ad that ran on the that newspaper's front page on Sunday, October 4, 2020, and to release an email Oct. 7th to 50,000 citizens in Baltimore County.

GET READY TO VOTE!

1] Vote by Mail. Registered voters can request a mail-in ballot by October 20th by completing the application mailed to their residence, or by texting VBM to 77788.

****Sign and date your ballot envelope or your ballot will NOT be counted.**** (BLACK ink only)

***On or before Nov 3, return your mail-in ballot through the Post Office, or place it in a secure ballot drop box, or deliver it by hand to a Voting Center.**

2] Vote in Person

- at Early Voting Centers from October 26 - November 2.
- on Election Day, November 3, at Voting Centers.

—**NOT REGISTERED?** You may register and vote in person during Early Voting or on Election Day.



SCAN ME

for:
important deadlines, and
locations for secure ballot
drop boxes and in-person
voting centers or go to
www.elections.maryland.org



SCAN ME

- to:
- Register to vote
 - Check your voter registration information
 - Find candidate information and ballot measures
 - Obtain a personalized Voters' Guide
 - Go to www.Vote411.org



SCAN ME

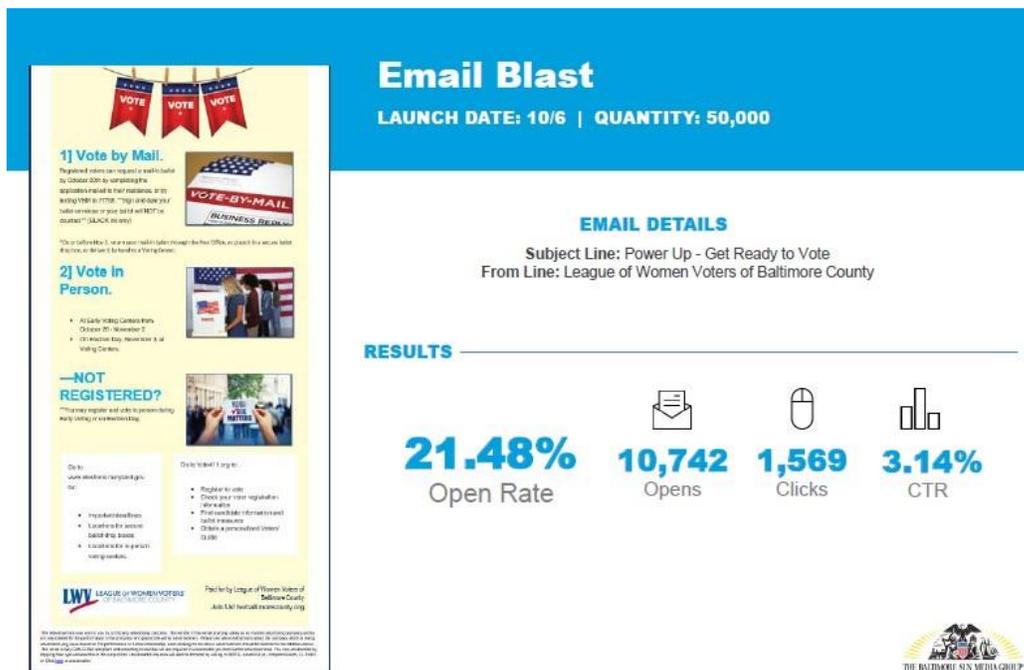
LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of BALTIMORE COUNTY
www.lwvbaltimorecounty.org/
Paid for by League of Women
Voters of Baltimore County

Both the ad and the email explained the process for mail-in, early, and election day voting. The ad contained QR codes for the LWVBCO, the MD Board of Elections, and Vote411.org, while our email had actual links to those three websites.

We believed that clarity and brevity were essential, so both the ad and the email were short and concise. We explained that people could register during early voting and on Election Day; we also emphasized the various voting and application deadlines, and pointed out that the location of drop boxes and the various deadlines could be found on the Maryland Board of Election website.

When we started this process in late August, little information concerning how to vote had yet been in our local media. However, it became clear that we were on the right track when the communications specialist at *The Sun* said, “This is great! I printed it out and saved it, so I’d know how to vote in November.” Working with her and the art department at *The Sun* took about four weeks from start to finish.

The statistics related to the readership of the email were much better than expected. The 50,000-person email we designed, and through *The Sun* launched on Oct. 7, was read, and responded to by more people than usual for a typical email produced through *The Sun*. We were told we could expect about 8% of the 50,000 people to whom we sent the email to open the email. Within days, our "Power up - Get Ready to Vote" email was opened by 21.48%. Also, it was exciting to see that 203 people clicked on our LWVBCo link, and 180 people clicked on the Vote411 link. Including the MD Board of Elections, a total of 1,569 people clicked on one of our 3 links. Not only did we educate Baltimore County voters, but we also enhanced our league's visibility.



MEMBERSHIP

What is a life member? It is anyone who has dedicated fifty years to league membership. We have many of those on our roster, but the latest person to join the elite is Ralph Rigger, our sole male board member. He has done much for our league, especially in building contraptions to make us shine. Next time you visit the office you'll appreciate the large letters spelling out who we are. When we resume events, look for our League life-size sign and appreciate the sign frame that Ralph built.

Congrats to Ralph on his lifetime achievement.



NEW MEMBERS

LWV Baltimore County welcomes you!

Lynn Robinson
Robin Richardson
Kathryn Jeffries
Stacey Morrison
Dawn Minor



PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS

BOOK CLUB

There is plenty of room to join book club since now all meetings are virtual. Please contact Betsy Sexton, esexton2009@lwvbaltimorecounty.org for the link and time.

Wednesday, November 18- *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins

Wednesday, December 16- *The Address* by Fiona Davis

Wednesday, January 27- *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson

LEGISLATIVE LUNCHEON

Before the Maryland General Assembly begins each January, we typically invite our state legislators to share their priorities and hear our updated league legislative focus. As Covid resurges we are shuffling our usual efforts to create a virtual luncheon meeting. More details will be shared in the coming weeks. There are still plans to make, people to contact, and the meeting to run. If you would like to help, please contact the Maggy at our office, contact@LWVBaltimoreCounty.org or call 410-377-8046.

At least this year we won't need a kitchen clean-up crew!

COUNTY/CITY PROGRAMMING

Seventy-nine people from all over the country logged into our November 10 event, *Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality for All*. Dr. Martha S. Jones, a legal and cultural historian, examined how Black Americans have shaped U.S. democracy and revealed how previously little-known women effectively struggled against violence to vote and have their voices heard.

She remarked that although we honor 2020 as the one-hundred-year anniversary of women's suffrage and the 19th amendment, we forget that women of color still battled for equal voting rights.

Her book of the challenges and courage of women of color should be one on everyone's reading list. The entire presentation is shared on LWVMD.org or use the following links.

- ✓ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1p19yhvoKZ2DmJDDIGdWfSJbP2AEZqUpC/view?usp=sharing>
- ✓ https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fdrive.google.com%2Ffile%2Fd%2F1p19yhvoKZ2DmJDDIGdWfSJbP2AEZqUpC%2Fview%3Fusp%3Dsharing&h=AT0SxwihmsFdFOHUz-a7v_S_qb4uyB75YehgZxCgy8rgLuiIB_GRopoGd5O8_YFrjck5dvsfm34SuvQq_UITuV4rHWV_RpTEKLRtJQ7eUQyG84R6oCBRhDffoetzAuZxVg3K7fj8&s=1

For now, the programming committee is regrouping and scheduling new events. Look for them in 2021. If you have speaker suggestions or would like to join the committee, please email Sharalyn at sharalynu@lwvbaltimorecounty.org.

CONSENSUS

CONSENSUS MEETING – VOTE BY MAIL

Nelson Andrews

In these turbulent times, Marylanders learned that voting by mail is definitely possible and maybe preferable for this state. The Maryland League is asking us to have a consensus meeting to determine whether Maryland should *Vote by Mail* (VBM) in the future.



Our consensus meeting will take place virtually on **November 19 at 7:00 p.m.** using the Zoom Meeting link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82429534623?pwd=S2crUkpUME1Da0prTEd2NlVJdlVuQT09>.

You will be able to stay at home and join other members in coming to consensus about the viability of voting by mail. We will also look at several actions by the Election Board both prior to and after an election to assure privacy, tracking mechanisms, use of drop boxes, counting of ballots, and opportunities to resolve problems prior to the final day of elections.

As Marylanders, we have had two elections in which voting by mail was used. One where VBM was the exclusive mechanism for voting and one where there was a hybrid model and you had to request a mail-in ballot. In our primary more votes were cast than in the general election. This should give us pause. Was it because it was easier to return the ballots? Does voting by mail give greater access to the voting process for underserved communities, something that the League should consider?

Did you have a problem during either of our elections voting? This could be important information to consider during a consensus meeting. How many other states use VBM and has the percentage of voters increased through a VBM system? Are there partisan advantages to a VBM system?

These are just a few of the questions that will be discussed on November 19. Join us for the consensus meeting in the comfort of your home at 7:00 p.m. by clicking on:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82429534623?pwd=S2crUkpUME1Da0prTEd2NlVJdlVuQT09>

CONSENSUS FACT SHEET:

VOTE BY MAIL (VBM) IN MARYLAND

INTRODUCTION & SCOPE

Should the Maryland League of Women Voters adopt a position on voting by mail as the statewide norm for all elections? The Montgomery County League recommended a study on vote by mail in June 2019, noting that Rockville planned to use this method in its November 2019 election. A study committee began work in the fall, but by spring 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had made the subject more pressing. At its June 2020 Council Meeting, the LWV of Maryland (LWVMD) determined that a state-wide study should be done instead and be completed in time to have a consensus position in place for the start of the Maryland legislative session in 2021. Although this fact sheet includes examples from recent elections, any consensus we may reach would potentially apply to Maryland's elections held after 2020.

DEFINITION OF VOTE BY MAIL (VBM)

In this fact sheet, when we use the term “vote by mail” we mean the method for conducting elections in which voters automatically receive a ballot in the mail without having to request one first, and in-person voting options are available but limited. In vote by mail elections, ballots are delivered to voters by mail

weeks before Election Day, filled out at their convenience, and then returned by mail or other means.³ In a VBM election, because *most* voters use the mail to cast their ballots, only a limited number of in-person voting centers are available on or before election day for voters who may need assistance, have a preference to vote in-person, seek to register on election day, or may not have received a ballot by mail. Even states that use “all” vote by mail make some in-person voting options available. Vote by mail contrasts with absentee voting, in which each voter must *request* an absentee ballot for each election and then return the completed ballot (usually by mail).⁴ Typically, absentee voting has been used by a minority of voters, with most voters choosing to cast their ballots in person.⁵

BACKGROUND

VBM in Other States: VBM is the standard state-wide method of voting in four states. Oregon implemented VBM state-wide in 2000, Washington in 2011, Colorado in 2014. Hawaii used the method statewide for the first time in 2020. Utah introduced VBM in 2013 and rolled it out by county, with statewide implementation in 2020.

Turnout: VBM can play a part in increasing voter turnout. Although states with established VBM often report much higher turnout than other states, a 2020 study produced by the Stanford University Democracy & Polarization Lab suggests that, on average, turnout runs about 2-3 percent higher (analyzing multiple types of elections and over time).⁶ However, in any particular election, VBM turnout is affected by the same factors that affect turnout for in-person voting: whether it’s a presidential or mid-year election, if there are high profile contests or issues, or if the ballot includes controversial initiatives. Demographic factors, such as age or racial and ethnic makeup of the voting population, regional variations like population density or location of polls or vote centers, and comfort with USPS can all affect voter participation. In Maryland, when Rockville used vote-by-mail for the first time in its 2019 Mayoral election, turnout almost doubled from about 16% in 2015 to about 31% in 2019.⁷ In contrast, in Maryland’s 2020 Primary Election, using VBM for the first time in a statewide contest, voter turnout was about the same as in the 2016 primary election at just over 40%.⁸

Effects of VBM on Different Populations: While VBM may offer advantages to some population groups, others may need special attention. For example, VBM can be helpful for senior citizens or voters living in rural or remote areas who may find it difficult to travel to vote. However, it can be a disadvantage for populations that move more frequently, such as people who are young or poor.⁹ Implementation of VBM also requires attention to the needs of frequently disenfranchised voters. Some, like homeless people or residents of Native American reservations, may not have acceptable mailing addresses on file in state databases; others, like people incarcerated for a misdemeanor or failure to post bail,¹⁰ may not have access to information about voting; still others with disabilities may need special tools to fill out their ballots.

³ Adapted from www.voteathome.org.

⁴ Some states require a reason for requesting an absentee ballot; Maryland offers “no excuse” absentee voting.

⁵ In Maryland, the State legislature changed the term used for absentee voting to “mail-in voting” during its 2020 session. See State Board of Elections Comprehensive Plan for the 2020 Primary Election (June 2, 2020).

⁶ Thompson, Daniel; Wu, Jennifer; Yoder, Jesse; Hall, Andrew, “The Neutral Partisan Effects of Vote-By-Mail: Evidence From County-Level Rollouts,” Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, Working Paper No. 20-015, April 2020, <https://siepr.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/20-015.pdf>

⁷ Rockville Board of Supervisors of Elections report on November 5, 2019 Election Report, April 6, 2020

⁸ Department of Legislative Services, Office of Policy Analysis, “Covid-19 and Voting By Mail,” Presentation to the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee and the House Committee Ways and Means, June 16, 2020.

⁹ Michael Wines, “Which Party Would Benefit Most From Voting By Mail? It’s Complicated,” New York Times, May 26, 2020,

¹⁰ People convicted of a felony and currently serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment are not eligible to vote. See https://elections.maryland.gov/voter_registration/

Voters who have only a post office box as their official address (for both residential and mailing purposes) should be informed on how to register, request a ballot and what to do if a ballot is not received in adequate time before an election.¹¹ Requesting or downloading a ballot online requires internet access and a printer, which are not available to all voters. Such voters need to have options other than VBM available to them.

Partisan Advantages: There is no evidence that VBM favors one party or another. Looking at elections in 3 states, from 1996 to 2018, researchers found that VBM did not affect either party's turnout or share of the vote.¹² Dominance by one party is more likely to reflect the patterns of power within a state, such as design of district maps or use of plurality or majority election systems.¹³ A survey done in 2003, three years after Oregon implemented VBM, by Dr. Priscilla Southwell, a professor of Political Science at the University of Oregon, found that 81% of respondents favored the vote-by-mail system while 19% favored traditional voting at a polling place. The poll also shows high favorability among both registered Democrats (85%) and Republicans (76%). About thirty percent of respondents said they had voted more often after vote-by-mail was implemented, and 48% of voters who identified as disabled or unable to work reported voting more often after VBM.¹⁴

MARYLAND LAW REGARDING VOTE BY MAIL

Maryland election rules currently permit conducting elections by mail under limited circumstances: for special elections that are not held at the same time as a regularly scheduled primary or general election, for local special elections approved by the relevant County Council or a Board of Commissioners, and certain other situations.¹⁵ The Governor may also proclaim a special election using vote by mail to fill a vacancy in an Office of Representative in Congress.

Because a state of emergency and a catastrophic public health emergency existed in Maryland, Governor Hogan issued a proclamation on April 10, 2020, directing that the special election in District 7 to fill the remainder of the term of Congressman Elijah Cummings be conducted "solely" using VBM (this was held on April 28). He also directed that the 2020 Presidential Primary Election (held on June 2) would be conducted using VBM with limited in-person voting. This was less than 6 weeks before ballots had to start being mailed and the first time the method would be used statewide.

PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTING VOTE BY MAIL

Implementing VBM represents an enormous undertaking that affects State and local Boards of Elections, voters, and candidates running for office. Every step in the voting process is affected, including procedures that take place before an election, during the election and after an election.

Before the election

Steps must be taken to ensure the accuracy of the voter lists, to establish contracts with vendors to print secure ballots, and to support the timely delivery of ballots to voters.

¹¹In a municipal election in August 2020, some voters in Washington County who only have a P.O. box as their address did not receive their ballots and had to vote provisionally. Election officials believe there was a problem that may have affected some voters whose address is a P.O. box.

¹²Daniel Thompson, Jennifer Wu, Jesse Yoder, Andrew Hall, "Universal Vote-By-Mail Has No Impact on Partisan Turnout or Vote Share," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Vol. 117, No. 25, June 23, 2020 (first published June 9, 2020).

¹³ League of Women Voters of Washington Education Fund, "An Evaluation of Major Election Methods and Selected State Laws, Fall 2000.

¹⁴Southwell, Priscilla, "Five Years Later: A Re-Assessment of Oregon's Vote by Mail Electoral Process," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Jan. 2004), pp. 89-93

¹⁵2017 Maryland Code, Election Law, Title 9 – Voting, Subtitle 5 - Voting by Mail in Special Elections. § 9-501. Voting by mail. Universal Citation: MD Elec Law Code § 9-501 (2017)

Accuracy of Voter Lists

Accurate and up-to-date voter rolls are essential for the successful implementation of VBM. Inaccurate or incomplete voter lists can result in people getting a ballot too late or not at all. In Maryland, the official voter registration list is established by the State, is coordinated with other state databases, and is accessed electronically by local boards.

Responsibility for updating voter information ultimately rests with individual voters. In Maryland, the rules and processes used for absentee voting and for special elections done by mail include requirements for updating registration information.¹⁶ In traditional absentee voting, the voter must complete a ballot *application form* that requires the voter's name, address and signature.¹⁷ Completion of the application ensures updated voter information for the 6-8%¹⁸ of voters who typically rely on absentee voting in an election. In VBM special elections, the local board mails a non-forwardable *ballot* to each voter on the State registration list, using the voter information on record.¹⁹ While communication campaigns may ask voters to voluntarily check and update their voter information, not all voters comply. The State Board of Elections may remove a voter from the registration lists in certain circumstances.²⁰ Reliable connections with the Department of Motor Vehicles can also help update voter lists.

Examples of practices that have been used to update voter lists include:

- (1) *Extensive voter education campaigns*: these should start months before any ballot is mailed. The U.S. Election Assistance Commission recommends that education campaigns include guidance for voters on topics such as how to update voter information, how to get and return a ballot, how to complete a ballot, how to correct a mistake, deadlines, how to know if a ballot was accepted, and how to get help completing a ballot.
- (2) *Multiple mailings (postcards) before sending a ballot*: the mailings that are returned as undeliverable can be checked (e.g., did the voter move or die).²¹ In Rockville's 2019 election, the Board of Supervisors of Election (BSE) sent several mailings before sending the actual ballot. For its election, 2,319 (5.86%) were returned as undeliverable. In Maryland's June 2 primary, there was not enough time to directly mail an alert to all voters, but the state communications campaign told voters to check and update their voter information; almost 160,000 (4.4%) ballots were returned as undeliverable.²²
- (3) *Absentee applications sent instead of a ballot*: sending absentee applications requires voters to confirm or update their address or other information. However, it inserts an extra step for the

¹⁶ Maryland Code, Election Law, Sec. 9-301 and Sec. 9-501. Code of Maryland Regulations.

¹⁷ A voter who requests an absentee ballot online must also provide a driver's license number or Maryland ID number and the last 4 digits of their social security number.

¹⁸ This is the typical percentage in a presidential election; other elections show lower rates.

¹⁹ If the voter wants to receive the ballot at a different address, the voter must complete a separate absentee ballot application.

²⁰ The circumstances are: (a) the Maryland Dept of Health or the Social Security Administration notifies them of the voter's death; (b) the voter has been convicted of a felony and is in prison; (c) the voter is under a mental disability and a court has specifically found that the voter can't communicate a desire to participate in the voting process; (d) the voter has been convicted of buying or selling votes; (e) the voter has moved, which typically is learned when the Postal Service returns a mailed sample ballot with an address correction or is undeliverable.

²¹ Even states that have been using VBM for years get ballots returned. Oregon has been mailing ballots to voters since 1998 and estimates that 2-3% are returned; Washington has used VBM since 2005 and estimates that 10% are returned as undeliverable.

²² Maryland State Board of Elections, "Report on June 2 Election & Recommendations for November 3 Election," issued July 2, 2020.

https://elections.maryland.gov/press_room/June%202020Election%20Report_Final%2007022020.pdf

voter, and the two mailings (the application and the ballot) increase the labor demands on and expenses incurred by Boards of Elections.

Vendor Contracts

Vendors are used by many Boards of Elections to reduce the number of extra staff that must be hired to meet the increased workload created by elections and which must get done quickly. Vendors support ballot printing and mailing, support the voting equipment (e.g., scanners), support databases for voter lists, and help build election websites. In Maryland, the State Board of Elections provides the vendor with templates for all of the ballot inserts, the mailing schedule and voter data. The vendor prints, inserts, and mails the ballot packets.²³ During Maryland's 2020 primary, concerns arose with the vendor responsible for printing and getting ballots to the postal service. However, there are few certified vendors in the country who are able to satisfy the requirements for printing secure ballots and envelopes.²⁴ The State Board of Elections acknowledged the need for greater accountability over vendors. Greater transparency can also help the public understand which vendors are used and their experience.

Mailing Ballots

The actual ballots must be mailed early enough to give voters sufficient time to mark their ballots and return them by the deadline. Voters should also have sufficient time to notify the Board of Elections if a ballot was not received or the voter made a mistake and needs a replacement. In Oregon, for example, voters must be registered 21 days before an election, and ballots are mailed shortly after that. This allows time for notification of the Board of Elections if a ballot has not been received. In Colorado, ballots are mailed at least 18 days before an election.²⁵ In some states, the voter puts the ballot into an "extra" privacy envelope or sleeve that is then inserted into a mailing envelope. Maryland allows local boards to do this but does not require it.²⁶

During the Voting Period

During the voting period, procedures needed to ensure the smooth running of the election include ballot tracking by the Board of Election, voter options for returning a ballot and when they are due, and checking on the status of a submitted ballot.

Board of Elections Mail Tracking

The ability to track mailed ballots relies on the use of the postal service's "intelligent mail barcodes," which allows the election office to track ballots in the mail process, from drop-off to delivery to processing at the local board.²⁷ Each ballot has a unique barcode, which inhibits unauthorized duplication.²⁸ If a voter thinks a ballot was taken from their mailbox and requests another, the original barcode and ballot are invalidated. Use of intelligent mail barcodes is a best practice recommended by the U.S. Election Assistance

²³Maryland State Board of Elections, Presentation to the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee and the House Committee on Ways and Means, June 16, 2020

²⁴For example, secure ballots require specialized paper that can be read by optical scanners and envelopes with barcodes specific to each voter. See U.S. Election Assistance Commission, "Managing an Increase in Outbound Ballots." https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/electionofficials/vbm/Outbound_Mail_Ballots.pdf

²⁵Information obtained from the Secretary of State website for each state.

²⁶Maryland Code, Election Law, Sec. 9-310, Code of Maryland Regulations. For the 2020 general election, the plan is for the return envelope ballots to have a flap to cover the voter's name and signature.

²⁷U.S. Election Assistance Commission, "Managing an Increase in Outbound Ballots." https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/electionofficials/vbm/Outbound_Mail_Ballots.pdf

²⁸Mike Baker, "The Facts About Mail-in Voting and Voter Fraud," New York Times, June 22, 2020.

Commission. According to the State Board of Elections report on the June 2, 2020 primary, Maryland uses this application.

Options for Returning A Ballot

In VBM, voters usually have three ways of returning their ballot:

- 1) *By mail*: some states pay for the return postage, but in others, the voter must pay for it. In Maryland, ballots have been sent with postage-paid return envelopes.
- 2) *Drop box*: all VBM states provide drop boxes as an alternative to the U.S. mail. Drop boxes are monitored by security cameras set up for the election, or in locations that already have security cameras (such as schools). They should be located in areas where voters feel safe, especially during non-business hours (this was a concern identified by some voters in Maryland's 2020 primary election). Also, drop boxes should be accessible to voters who walk to them or use public transportation. Finally, drop boxes should be set up in as many locations as needed to make them convenient and easy to find. According to the Survey of the Performance of American Elections at Harvard University in 2016, 73 percent of voters in Colorado, 59 percent in Oregon, and 65 percent in Washington returned their ballots to some physical location, such as a drop box or local election office.²⁹ In the 2020 Maryland primary, procedures were established for retrieving ballots from drop boxes, including that the person picking up ballots must be sworn in and display a state or county ID and that law enforcement be notified of the box's location; ballots were retrieved three times per day.³⁰ For the primary, 13% of voters returned their ballot by drop box, ranging from a low of 6% in Worcester and Baltimore Counties to a high of 44% in Kent County.³¹
- 3) *In-person voting center*: all states that currently use VBM have a minimum number of in-person voting locations for voters who are unable to fill out a paper ballot, need assistance completing a ballot, have no permanent address, prefer to vote in person, or want to register to vote (same day registration). In VBM, the number of in-person voting sites is limited, perhaps to only one per county. Colorado bases the number of in-person voting centers on population, similar to Maryland's approach for determining the number of voting centers for in-person early voting.³² VBM states may not have a time that is called "early voting" but may still have a voting period in which in-person centers are open for some days before Election Day. In some states, voters may return a ballot to any vote center or drop box in the state. For example, in Oregon, if a local board receives a ballot from a voter in another part of the state, it records the receipt of the ballot in the state's database and then sends the ballot to the appropriate local board for tabulation. This verifies timely receipt of the ballot and also ensures that a voter cannot try to cast another ballot at another voting center.

When Ballots Are Due

In some states, ballots must be *received* by the close of in-person voting centers on election day. In other states—including Maryland—ballots must be *postmarked* by election day. When the deadline relies on a postmark, ballots may continue to arrive at the Board of Elections after Election day, which can extend the time for counting the ballots. Voters need to have clear information on when ballots are due in order for their vote to be counted and understand that dropping a ballot into a corner mailbox on election day may

²⁹Survey of the Performance of American Elections at Harvard University. See MIT Election and Science Lab, <https://electionlab.mit.edu/research/voting-mail-and-absentee-voting>

³⁰ https://elections.maryland.gov/about/meeting_materials/May_14_2020.pdf

³¹Maryland State Board of Elections, Report on the June 2 Election and Recommendations for November 3 Election. Issued July 2, 2020. https://elections.maryland.gov/press_room/June%202020Election%20Report_Final%2007022020.pdf

³²Amanda King, "Voter Service and Polling Centers," Issue Brief, Legislative Council Staff, Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature, Number 20-06, February 2020. Also, Maryland State Board of Elections, Early Voting, https://elections.maryland.gov/voting/early_voting.html

not ensure a timely postmark. In Maryland, a late postmark is the most common reason for not counting a ballot.³³

Ability of Voters to Check on the Status of a Returned Ballot

Voters using VBM often want to verify that their ballot was received and counted. A verification system also helps contribute to security. In Maryland's 2020 primary election, voters were able to check online for the status of their ballots by going to the Voter Search page on the State Board of Elections website, which can be found at <https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/VoterSearch>.

After the Election

Specific procedures that occur after the voting period include checking and tabulating the ballots and releasing results. Counting the ballots is also known as canvassing. The word "canvassing" can have two meanings. For many people, it describes people going door to door promoting a candidate, an issue, or collecting polling data. However, in Maryland (and elsewhere), canvassing refers to the process of counting and recording votes.³⁴

Checking Returned Ballots for Timeliness and Signature Before Counting

In Maryland, mailed-in ballots are checked for two things before being counted. First, ballots are checked for timeliness. This means that the postmark must show that the ballot was mailed on time. Second, mailed-in ballots are checked to ensure the voter has signed the oath on the outside of the ballot return envelope and that the envelope is sealed.³⁵ However, Maryland does not require signature verification, the most common method used to verify that a ballot is coming from the intended voter.³⁶ This involves comparing the voter's signature on the outside of the ballot return envelope to one on file with the Board of Elections. According to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, this may be done manually using a hand-held scanner, but as more ballots are mailed in, automated technology that captures the voter's signature on the ballot return envelope can process signatures more quickly. Typically, voters are notified by mail with instructions on how to correct a questionable signature (email and/or telephone may also be used). The voter mails back a signed form to correct the problem; a copy of valid identification may also be required.³⁷ When the form is received, trained workers compare it to the signature on the returned ballot envelope and determine whether to accept the ballot for counting. The signature on the returned form becomes the signature on file for future elections. In California, which has been transitioning to VBM, some counties ask voters to return multiple versions of their signature to keep on file.³⁸

³³ Maryland State Board of Elections, Report on the June 2 Election and Recommendations for November 3 Election. Issued July 2, 2020.

https://elections.maryland.gov/press_room/June%202020Election%20Report_Final%2007022020.pdf

³⁴ "Canvass" includes the entire process of vote tallying, vote tabulation, and vote verification or audit, culminating in the production and certification of the official election results. See Code Of Maryland Regulations, Sec. 11-101.

³⁵ Maryland Code, Election Law, Sec. 9-310, Code of Maryland Regulations

³⁶ National Conference of State Legislatures, "Voting Outside the Polling Place: Absentee, All-Mail, and Other Voting at Home Options, July 10, 2020. <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/absentee-and-early-voting.aspx>.

³⁷ U.S. Election Assistance Commission, "Signature Verification and Cure Process," https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/electionofficials/vbm/Signature_Verification_Cure_Process.pdf

³⁸ Signature Verification and Mail Ballots: Guaranteeing Access While Preserving Integrity A Case Study of California's Every Vote Counts Act, Policy Practicum: Every Vote Counts (Law 806Z) Spring 2019-20, Stanford Law School, Law and Policy Lab, May 15, 2020

All five VBM states use signature verification and provide an opportunity for voters to correct a questionable signature.³⁹ For example, in Utah, voters are notified within 1-2 business days if a signature is rejected before election day (or within 7 days if the rejection occurs on or after election day) and have to correct it by 5:00 p.m. the day before official results are certified. In Colorado, voters are notified within 3 days (2 days if the rejection is after election day) and have up to 8 days after election day to correct it.

Questions about the accuracy of signature verification and the possibility of mistaken rejection of ballots have led some to view signature verification as a form of voter suppression. Signatures can change over time for various reasons, including age (young people's signatures particularly change), illness or disability. Ballot rejection in some states in the 2018 election disproportionately affected people with disabilities and minorities.⁴⁰ Privacy and trust issues also arise if signature verification is done on an unsealed ballot envelope. While allowing voters to cure a rejected ballot, it also creates an extra step that some voters have to take to cast their ballot. This can create confusion and delay, especially if the voter's native language is not English.

Verified Voting, a nonpartisan group focused on election technology, notes that signature verification is the "best currently-available means to detect ballots cast under a false identity" but automated software cannot be relied upon as the sole means to **REJECT** ballots.⁴¹ The U.S. Election Assistance Commission recommends using a multi-leveled process to review signatures so that no ballot can be rejected based on a single review or without in-person inspection. Maryland does not conduct a signature verification process for voters, regardless of whether someone votes by mail or in person. If Maryland chooses to require signature verification, there will be cost for software, for training personnel to use it and for voter education.

Tabulating Votes

In a VBM system, although there is no official "early voting period," voters can mail in completed ballots as soon as they have been received. In many states, canvassers begin recording ballots as soon as they come in; in other states, ballots may not be opened before election day. In Maryland, election code directs that canvassing of absentee ballots may not begin until the Wednesday after election day and for special elections, canvassing may begin on election day.⁴² However, for the special and primary elections in 2020, Gov. Hogan directed that counting could begin 12 days before election day.

During counting, some ballots may be rejected. According to the report of the Maryland State Board of Elections, 2.39 percent of mailed ballots were rejected in the June 2020 primary. The two most common reasons for rejection are ballots submitted after the mailing deadline or missing signatures (for the oath on the outside of the envelope). Best practices include systems for contacting voters and allowing them to

³⁹ In total, 31 states use signature verification and 19 provide an opportunity for voters to correct a questionable signature. See National Conference of State Legislatures, "VOPP: Table 14: How States Verify Voted Absentee Ballots" 4/17/2020, <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/vopp-table-14-how-states-verify-voted-absentee.aspx>. See also "VOPP: Table 15: States That Permit Voters to Correct Signature Discrepancies," 8/7/2020, <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/vopp-table-15-states-that-permit-voters-to-correct-signature-discrepancies.aspx>

⁴⁰ Danielle Root and Adam Barclay, "Voter Suppression During the 2018 Midterm Elections," Center for American Progress, November 20, 2018. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/democracy/reports/2018/11/20/461296/voter-suppression-2018-midterm-elections/>

⁴¹ Verified Voting, "COVID-19 and Trustworthy Elections," April 10, 2020. <https://verifiedvoting.org/publication/covid-19-and-trustworthy-elections/>

⁴² For absentee ballots, canvassing may begin at 8:00 a.m. on the Wednesday after election day; see Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) Section 11-302. For special elections, canvassing may begin at 2:00 p.m. on the day of a special election; see COMAR Section 9-506.

correct an error such as a missing signature. Voter education could include the reasons that ballots are rejected and how to avoid them.

Releasing Results

Canvassing typically takes longer in a VBM election than in conventional in-person elections. Checking each submitted ballot takes longer than checking only the small percentage of absentee ballots typically submitted. In addition, when the mailing deadline is based on a postmark, ballots may continue to arrive after election day. Preliminary results may be released on election day, with final results coming later after all ballots have been counted. Results for Maryland's June 2, 2020 primary were certified on July 2, 2020.⁴³ Voters need to understand that final results may be delayed and may change from preliminary results. Best practices include releasing results by precinct since this provides another security check (e.g., were the votes counted approximately equal to the number of qualified voters?).

OTHER ISSUES IN IMPLEMENTING VBM

Two other general issues arise in implementing VBM. One relates to costs and another to security.

Costs

VBM shifts the costs required to conduct elections. In a mostly in-person election, significant costs are incurred for hiring poll workers and renting voting centers. While fewer are needed in VBM elections, greater expenses are incurred for printing ballots (including instructions and return envelopes) and postage.⁴⁴ Most election costs fall on counties and local jurisdictions,⁴⁵ although in Maryland, the state and counties split some of the costs. According to the Code of Maryland Regulations, the state acquires and certifies voting technology, such as pollbooks and scanners, and the costs are split 50/50 between the state and the localities. The state also helps pay for the postage-paid ballot returns and maintains the voter registration database. Local counties support the operation of their local election boards as well as polling place expenses (such as space rentals and poll workers) and supplies. Providing drop boxes may also add expense, including surveillance set-up and timely retrieval of ballots from them.

It is possible that VBM may be costlier in early years of transition because of the need to operate both in-person voting options and VBM side-by-side. A study done on Colorado elections found that certain cost categories were reduced by an average 40% after the state shifted to predominantly VBM.⁴⁶ Counties spent an average of \$9.56 per vote in 2014, down from \$15.96 in 2008, and all but three counties spent less per vote in 2014 than in 2008. To the extent that VBM increases election costs—especially in the earlier years of a transition—the burden can be significant, particularly on the smaller counties. However, as seen in Colorado, in the long run expenses have the potential to decline.

Security

Security is a concern in all elections, regardless of method, and several security measures have been discussed already, such as updating voter lists, checking postmarks and signatures on ballots before counting them, and allowing voters to check the status of their returned ballots. Another measure is a high penalty for voter fraud. Violations can run from the hundreds of dollars to thousands of dollars. Anyone who commits voter fraud using a mail ballot risks severe criminal and civil penalties; up to five years in prison and \$10,000 in fines for each act of fraud under federal law, in addition to any state penalties. In

⁴³ https://elections.maryland.gov/about/documents/Canvass_Agenda_06_02_2020.pdf

⁴⁴ Ballot printing costs may increase because ballots must be printed for *every* voter, not just for those who vote in-person.

⁴⁵ National Council of State Legislatures, "Election Costs, What States Pay," August 3, 2018, <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/election-costs.aspx>.

⁴⁶ See Pew Charitable Trusts, "Colorado Voting Reforms: Early Results," March 2016. file:///C:/Users/Linda/Documents/LWV/All%20Mail-In%20Voting/coloradovotingreformsearlyresults_pew.pdf

Oregon, for example, voting with or signing another person's ballot is a Class C felony punishable by up to five years in prison.⁴⁷ Some states have laws to limit who can return ballots.⁴⁸

VBM has not increased the risk of fraud in states that have been using VBM for many years. Colorado's Secretary of State notes that if there is a possibility of double voting, every case is sent to the attorney general; in 2018, 0.0027 percent of cases were forwarded. Colorado's Elections Director Judd Choate stated that jurisdictions with all-mail elections must constantly update voters' addresses to ensure that the right voters receive the right ballots. As a result, when a person moves, they are unlikely to get the wrong ballot by mail, whereas an in-person voter with an outdated address could be going to the wrong polling place for years. Based on her experience as Washington State's Director of Elections, Lori Augino added that "Of the nearly 3.2 million ballots cast [in Washington in 2018], only 0.004% of the total ballots cast may have been fraudulent." None of the five states that hold their elections primarily by mail has had any voter fraud scandals since making that change. Reports that have raised concerns about ballots that are "missing or unaccounted for" have been disputed.⁴⁹

SUMMARY OF THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF VBM

Advantages of VBM include:

- Ease of voting
 - Voters can vote from home, with time and resources to study the candidates and make their choices. This can be especially helpful for complicated ballot questions.
 - Voting is not limited to certain times when polling places are open. Voters who prefer or need to go to a polling place can have that option.
 - Voters do not need to make special arrangements to vote. Workers do not have to take time off, families do not have to arrange childcare, seniors do not have to stand in line.
 - Voters can have multiple options for returning ballots.
 - When voting is easier to do, voting participation (turnout) may increase.
- Safety & Security
 - VBM ensures there is a paper trail since the method relies on paper ballots. This facilitates post-election audits.
 - Voting lists are updated frequently when undeliverable mailings are returned to boards of elections, particularly if informational mailings are done prior to an election.
 - Fraud has not increased in states that have used VBM for many years. Safe and secure elections are a priority regardless of voting method.
- Costs
 - There is potential for long run savings in reduced need for poll workers, a decreased need to rent polling places and trimmed down costs for voting technology, such as pollbooks and scanners.

⁴⁷ Oregon Secretary of State, Elections Division, ORS 260.715

⁴⁸For example, California (which is transitioning to VBM) made it illegal to get paid to collect ballots and for employers to ask employees to bring their ballots into their workplace.

⁴⁹For example, RealClearPolitics warned of fraud in mail-in voting, citing an analysis that millions of ballots were missing or unaccounted for in elections conducted between 2012-2018. The analysis counted unreturned ballots as missing, acknowledging that there was no evidence that missing ballots were used fraudulently. The National Vote At Home Institute notes that an unreturned ballot is not missing; rather it is not voted. The Brennan Center for Justice states there is no evidence that voting by mail results in significant fraud and the threat is "infinitesimally small." <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/why-vote-mail-option-necessary>

Disadvantages of VBM include:

- Voting options and results
 - There are fewer in-person polling places and if they are not located conveniently, it can interfere with the ability of people to vote.
 - VBM can pose problems for certain populations who may not have a mailing address or who move often, such as homeless or poor people.
 - People may miss voting with friends and neighbors, and the sense of community tradition it brings.
 - Election results take longer to issue and certify, potentially creating voter confusion if preliminary and final results differ.
- Safety & Security
 - Concerns arise from the potential for family members or others to coerce voters when voting is done outside a polling place.
 - Vendor or postal service problems can result in ballot delivery problems. When such problems have occurred, they emerged close to election day and resulted in last-minute challenges for both voters and election officials.
 - Even when steps are taken to prevent fraud, some voters remain concerned that irregularities can occur. Voters must trust the election results regardless of the voting method used.
- Costs
 - Some election costs may increase, such as printing costs or expenses of acquiring signature verification software.
 - Voter education and outreach takes on even greater importance and can be costly. to conduct.

This fact sheet was prepared by Elaine Apter, Fran Berger, Harvey Berger, Sharon Campbell, Theresa Freligh, Rosemary Hess, Miriam Klapka, Linda Kohn (chair), Nancy Lawler, Brigitta Mullican, Laura Noell, Anne Riley, Linda Slothower, Nancy I. Smith, and Flo Valentine. A technical review was conducted by Ralph Watkins.

CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

As noted on page 1, this fact sheet defines “vote by mail” as elections in which voters automatically receive a ballot in the mail without having to request one first, and in-person voting options are available but limited.

There is one general consensus question listed and 10 questions that ask about the importance of certain actions. The “general consensus question” may be addressed after the other 10 questions have been considered.

General

Should LWVMD support the use of vote by mail (ballots automatically mailed to all qualified voters) for all elections in Maryland?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure _____

Comments

For each of the following questions, what importance do you assign to each one?

Actions Before An Election

1. A postage paid envelope should be provided for voters to return their ballot.

Essential _____ Preferred _____ Against _____ No Preference _____

Comments

2. Ballots should be mailed to voters at least 3 weeks before an election.

Essential _____ Preferred _____ Against _____ No Preference _____

Comments

3. Voter education and outreach must be a priority during a transition to VBM.

Essential _____ Preferred _____ Against _____ No Preference _____

Comments

Actions During An Election

- 4. Available technology should be used to enable tracking the ballot throughout the process of its mailing, return and counting.

Essential _____ Preferred _____ Against _____ No Preference _____

Comments

- 5. Mailed ballots should include a privacy envelope, so voters can secure their completed ballot inside the mailing envelope.

Essential _____ Preferred _____ Against _____ No Preference _____

Comments

- 6. Drop boxes that are appropriately secured, equitably distributed, and clearly identified should be available for voters to return their ballots.

Essential _____ Preferred _____ Against _____ No Preference _____

Comments

- 7. The limited in-person polling places should be available, conveniently and equitably located, and easily accessible, with at least one in every county.

Essential _____ Preferred _____ Against _____ No Preference _____

Comments

Actions After An Election

- 8. Ballot counting should begin before Election Day and final results released only after all certified votes have been counted.

Essential _____ Preferred _____ Against _____ No Preference _____

Comments

- 9. Voters should have an opportunity to sign the oath on a ballot envelope that has been rejected due to a missing signature.

Essential _____ Preferred _____ Against _____ No Preference _____

Comments

- 10. VBM should include signature verification procedures that include prompt notice to the voter of any challenge and an opportunity to resolve it.

Essential _____ Preferred _____ Against _____ No Preference _____

Comments

Other issues or comments noted that do not fall under one of the consensus questions.

LWV Baltimore County Consensus Meeting



November 19, 2020

7:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting



<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82429534623?pwd=S2crUkpUME1Da0prTEd2NlVJdlVuQT09>

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