

# Operation Wildfire: Good Things Happen When YOU Vote

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October 1, 2025

## What is the Value of Your Vote?

**A mail-in ballot is your insurance policy to protect your right to vote.**

It's your responsibility to take care of your family, to maintain your home, keep your car running and your grass mowed. There are probably a host of other things that you can name, too, but what about your civic duty? If you don't vote, elected officials might not care what you think because they have an agenda that's different than yours.

What value do you place on your right to vote? Is voting a priority for you? Is it worth planning for contingencies? We think so.

### Why Should You Vote by Mail?

- You don't take your right to vote for granted.
- You want to have input in selecting those who represent you.
- You want a contingency plan to ensure that your voice is heard – because something always comes up at the last minute that prevents you from getting to the polls.
- You can vote in the quiet convenience of your home.
- You have difficulty getting to the polls on Election Day due to childcare needs, employment, age, illness and/or disability.
- You won't need to stand in line on Election Day.
- You can volunteer for your favorite candidate(s) on Election Day – because you've already cast your ballot. What can you do? Be a poll watcher or a greeter at the polls; work the phone banks to remind people to vote; or, volunteer to drive voters to the polls.

It's easy to vote by mail.<sup>1</sup> Visit this link to learn how to apply in your state: <https://www.usa.gov/absentee-voting>

### Your Vote's Amplified Impact

While presidential elections draw millions of voters, local races can be decided by just a handful of votes. In this low turnout environment, your individual ballot carries more weight and can be the deciding factor in close contests.

### New Jersey and Virginia Gubernatorial Races

Voters in New Jersey and Virginia will elect new governors in 2025; another 36 states will go to the polls to elect governors in 2026.

### The Pennsylvania Courts

The citizens of Pennsylvania deserve and need judges who will interpret the law fairly and objectively; judges who will follow legal precedent and practice; and, judges who will never legislate from the bench. This year, voters will vote to retain (or not) three PA Supreme Court Justices, one Superior Court Judge and one Commonwealth Court Judge. In addition, a new Superior Court Judge and a Commonwealth Court Judge will be elected this year.

### Municipal Elections Shape Your Community

The local officials you elect make decisions that have a direct and immediate impact on your life:

- Deciding how your tax dollars are spent, creating budgets that determine funding for roads, emergency services, parks and libraries;

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<sup>1</sup> Absentee Voting and Vote-By-Mail, <https://www.usa.gov/absentee-voting>

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- Influencing public safety and law enforcement, setting policies for local police and fire departments, managing local courts and impacting criminal justice reform;
- Shaping your child's education, overseeing curriculum, school funding, rules and regulations and classroom sizes;
- Determining your housing and environment by creating zoning laws that affect property values and community development; and,
- Regulating essential public services, overseeing utilities like water, waste management and public transportation.

## **The Impact of Mail-in Ballots**

Recent statements and social media posts show that many, including President Trump, strongly oppose vote-by-mail. In fact, the President has claimed that it is corrupt and undermines election integrity, and plans an Executive Order to end the practice. Election law experts and constitutional scholars say that the President lacks the legal authority to ban mail-in voting. So what is the impact of mail-in voting?

## **Modest Increase in Voter Turnout<sup>2</sup>**

Studies have shown that vote by mail options increase turnout modestly in mid-term and presidential elections but may increase turnout more in primaries, local elections and special elections. This increase likely comes by bringing marginal voters into the electorate and by retaining voters who might otherwise drop out of the electorate.

## **Documented Election Fraud is Rare but More Frequent than In-Person Voting<sup>3</sup>**

Two major features of vote by mail raise concerns about election fraud. First, the ballot is cast outside the public eye, and opportunities for coercion and voter impersonation are greater. Second, the chain of custody for these ballots is not as secure as traditional in-person ballots. These security concerns relate both to ballots being intercepted and ballots being requested without the voter's permission.

As with all forms of election fraud, documented instances of fraud related to vote by mail are rare. However, even scholars who argue that fraud is generally rare agree that fraud with vote by mail seems to be more frequent than with in-person voting.

## **Earliest Voters Tend to be Strong Partisans<sup>4</sup>**

Skeptics of mail in ballots argue that this encourages voters to cast their ballots before all the information from the campaign is revealed, putting early voters at a disadvantage. In response, as more voters cast early ballots by mail or in person, campaigns have fewer incentives to hold onto negative information about their opponents in the hope of gaining an advantage through an October surprise. It is, however, important to note that the earliest voters tend to be the strongest partisans and, thus less likely to be swayed by last-minute information.

## **Candidate Ability to Reallocate Campaign Resources**

The embrace of mail-in voting allows campaigns to "bank" votes from supporters ahead of Election Day. This allows them to reallocate resources and focus on targeting other voters, rather than constantly reminding their base to show up on Election Day.

**A mail-in ballot is your insurance policy to protect your right to vote.  
Apply for yours today!**

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<sup>2</sup> MIT Election Data + Science Lab, <https://electionlab.mit.edu/research/voting-mail-and-absentee-voting>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.