

Mounting Requests Around Mail-In Ballots Foreshadow Election Challenges

Wisconsin has joined a growing list of states asking the Supreme Court to extend the deadline for receiving and counting mail-in ballots. The state joins Pennsylvania, Arizona, Michigan and North Carolina, where similar cases are being heard—all paving the way for a contested election.

The “voting rights groups” in Wisconsin include the state and national Democratic parties and the League of Women Voters, which sued to extend the deadline to accept the ballots. The argument for the extension involved the massive number of absentee ballots being distributed and how the pandemic is making it harder for voters to receive and return the ballots.

Prior, the U.S. District Judge agreed with the plaintiffs and ordered the state to accept ballots up to six days after the election day. The 7th U.S. Court of Appeals blocked the order.

For the 2020 election, much of the issue around mail-in ballots is resulting from mass mailing approved by state officials. In Michigan, for example, ballots were sent to every registered voter. Municipal clerks were left to answer countless questions from voters on why they received a ballot and what they should do with it if they opt to visit the polls or had already requested a mail-in ballot. Clerks who maintained their own lists of requested mail-in ballots and had those ballots on-hand for distribution, had to meticulously compare that list and void secondary ballots.

Headlines surrounding the issue read: “Florida extends voter registration deadline after website problems,” “Despite Trump’s claims, federal agencies foresee a secure election,” “New York district results delayed more than a month after

mail-in voting,” “With election cybersecurity in short supply, some states call in the National Guard” and “State voter registration systems have not been hacked, officials say.”

Since 2000, some states have switched almost exclusively to voting by mail, including Washington, Oregon, Utah, Colorado and Hawaii. Most researchers studies the moves to determine the outcomes. According to *Science* magazine, political scientist John Holbein with the University of Virginia compared voting behavior in counties that switched to mail-in voting and whether it shifted the outcome based on political party. The study shows that in presidential and midterm general elections between 1996 and 2018, the mail-in option increased the number of voters participating by 1.8 to 2.9%. There was also a small uptick in voter turnout for Democrats.

With the process in place and ballots underway, voters are left to do one thing: make sure their vote counts—whether it’s cast in person or through the mail.

“You and I, along with our fellow Americans, are about to experience a national election like no other in our nation’s history,” said Debbie Wuthnow, president of iVoterGuide. “With states using the COVID-19 virus as justification, as many as 100 million ballots will be mailed to voters.”

“An estimated 80 million of these ballots will be cast by mail, twice as many as 2016—easily enough voters to decide races from the U.S. president down to local judges,” Wuthnow added. “There are so many possible pitfalls it staggers the imagination—and should drive all Christians to prayer and action.”

Wuthnow encourages Christians to:

- Be informed. If they can vote in person, to do so.
- Help inform others and support them to get out and vote.

“We know that informed voters are motivated voters,” Wuthnow said. “Educate yourself and the people around you, and encourage friends and family to vote. Christians who use in-depth research and ratings are much more likely to vote. There are enough potential Christian votes to counter any incompetence or fraud in this year’s election.

“In 2018, educated voters helped make the difference in U.S. Senate races, governors’ races, U.S. House contests and numerous state legislative races. We can make an even bigger difference this year.” {eo}