Vote! 2020 General Election Guide

About: The 2020 General Election is quickly approaching and the Health Advocacy Summit wants to help make sure you are able to exercise your right to vote as a person with a chronic or rare disease. We strongly believe that the young people with chronic medical disabilities should be involved in the democratic process and voting information should be accessible.

We have compiled this election guide to help you learn about the 2020 candidates, inform you about the different methods of voting, and provide you a rundown of your voting rights. This is a working document and new information will be added periodically.

Please encourage your peers to vote - every single vote matters.

2020 United States General Election
Tuesday, November 3

Disclaimer: Health Advocacy Summit as an organization does not support or endorse any political party. All the resources and statements in this document are solely for education purposes and should not be used to assume any political views on behalf of the organization and its affiliates.

Feel free to email us with any questions, comments, concerns, or additional resources. If any links are not working, please email programs@healthadvocacysummit.org with the subject line “2020 Election Guide.”
Sections Included

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- Voting Quick Links
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  - Voting Information
  - Absentee Voting and COVID-19 Information
- About the 2020 Presidential Candidates: Disability and Healthcare Policy
  - Vice President Joe Biden (D)
  - President Donald Trump (R)
- Candidates with Disabilities
- Voting Rights and Accessibility
- Importance of Voters with Disabilities
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- Updates (August 25, 2020)
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- Information for Voters with Disabilities
- Ballot Tracking

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Resources

Voting Quick Links

- Register or Check Registration
  - [Check If You Are Registered to Vote](#)
  - [Register to Vote](#)
  - [Voter Registration Age Requirements by State](#)
  - [Voter Registration Deadlines by State](#)

- Voting Information and Resources
  - [AAPD Voter Resource Center](#)
  - [Election Dates & Deadlines by State](#)
  - [Find My Polling Station](#)
  - [Show Me My Ballot](#)
  - [State Voting Requirements & Information](#)
  - [Voter ID Laws](#)
  - [Voting Methods & Options by State](#)
  - [Your Local & State Election Information](#)

- Absentee Voting and COVID-19 Information
  - [Absentee Ballot Information by State](#)
  - [Get Your Absentee Ballot](#)
  - [Voting & COVID-19 Information by State](#)

About the 2020 Presidential Candidates: Disability and Healthcare Policy

- Vice President Joe Biden (D)
  - [AAPD Vice President Joe Biden Guide](#)
  - [About Vice President Joe Biden’s Stutter](#)
  - [The Biden Plan For Full Participation & Equality for People with Disabilities](#)
  - [Vice President Joe Biden’s Health Care Plan](#)

- President Donald Trump (R)
  - [AAPD President Donald Trump Guide](#)
  - [Making America Great Again Healthcare Plan](#)

Candidates with Disabilities

- [2020 List of Federal & State Candidates with Disabilities](#)

Voting Rights and Accessibility

- [NPR:](#) Disabled and Fighting For the Right to Vote
- [Pew Charitable Trust:](#) How Voters with Disabilities are Blocked From Ballot Box
- [Rooted in Rights:](#) Vote for Access
- [The Atlantic:](#) Keeping the ‘Mentally Incompetent’ From Voting
- [The Center for an Accessible Society:](#) Voting and People with Disabilities
- [US Election Assistance Commission:](#) Voting Accessibility

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Importance of Voters with Disabilities

- **Time**: Why Disabled Voters Could Be A Key Voting Bloc in 2020
- **AAPD**: Statistics About The Disability Community As A Powerful Voting Bloc

National Conference of State Legislatures: Voting Outside the Polling Place

- **NCSL**: Accepted Excuses to Vote Absentee by State
- **NCSL**: Ballot Drop Box Definitions, Design Features, Location, and Number
- **NCSL**: Receipt and Postmark Deadlines for Absentee Ballots
- **NCSL**: State Laws Governing Early Voting (2019)
- **NCSL**: States with Permanent Absentee Voting
- **NCSL**: When States Mail Out Absentee Ballots
- **NCSL**: Who Can Collect and Return an Absentee Ballot Other Than the Voter
Know Your Rights: Scope of Current Disability Voting Rights

Federal law mandates that disabled voters are provided appropriate accommodations in order to protect their right to have equal access to voting in federal elections. These accommodations include the ability to skip the line, voting by mail, assistance in marking ballots, and accessible technology in polling stations. Additionally, many states have similar laws for state elections.

Federal Laws

*Info from the [U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Disability Rights Section](https://www.justice.gov/crt)*

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**
  - The ADA “is a federal civil rights law that provides protections to people with disabilities... Title II of the ADA requires state and local governments ("public entities") to ensure that people with disabilities have a full and equal opportunity to vote. The ADA’s provisions apply to all aspects of voting, including voter registration, site selection, and the casting of ballots, whether on Election Day or during an early voting process.”

- **Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA)**
  - The HAVA “requires jurisdictions responsible for conducting federal elections to provide at least one accessible voting system for persons with disabilities at each polling place in federal elections. The accessible voting system must provide the same opportunity for access and participation, including privacy and independence, that other voters receive.”

- **National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA)**
  - The NVRA “aims, among other things, to increase the historically low registration rates of persons with disabilities. The NVRA requires all offices that provide public assistance or state-funded programs that primarily serve persons with disabilities to also provide the opportunity to register to vote in federal elections.”

- **Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA)**
  - The VRA “requires election officials to allow a voter who is blind or has another disability to receive assistance from a person of the voter’s choice (other than the voter’s employer or its agent or an officer or agent of the voter’s union). The VRA also prohibits conditioning the right to vote on a citizen being able to read or write, attaining a particular level of education, or passing an interpretation “test.””

- **Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984 (VAEHA)**
  - The VAEHA “requires accessible polling places in federal elections for elderly individuals and people with disabilities. Where no accessible location is available to serve as a polling place, voters must be provided an alternate means of voting on Election Day.”

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Register to Vote

All states have different requirements that must be met in order for you to be eligible to register to vote. Although many of the requirements are similar, there are slight differences. Be sure to double check with your state to see if there have been any changes made to eligibility requirements, deadlines, and documentation needed.

Documentation Needed to Register

Info from headcount.org

- “In most states you need an **address from which you plan to vote**, and an **ID number** – either a current and valid driver’s license or your social security number…”
- **Arizona and Kansas also require proof of citizenship.** In Arizona, [you must] provide an Arizona driver’s license or state ID number (issued after 10-01-1996), or documentary proof [i.e.] a birth or naturalization certificate along with the registration application.”
- “In Kansas, [first time voters must] provide documentary proof of citizenship…driver’s license does not suffice…must be…passport, birth certificate or naturalization certificate.”
- “In **Wisconsin**, all voters need to provide a proof of residency when [registering]. Options] include a valid in-state driver’s license with your current address or recent official mail with your name and address. **South Carolina and Vermont** also require proof of residency documentation if you register to vote by mail.”
- “In most states, if you have neither a current driver’s license or state-issued ID, and have never been issued a social security number, you can…register by indicating on the form that you have neither ID number…may require an affidavit or other documentation.”
- **North Dakota does NOT require voters to register!** Voters just need to bring a valid ID and proof of residency.

Ways to Register

- **National Mail Voter Registration Form**
- State Mail-In Form
- State Online Application (except AR, ME, MS, MT, NH, NJ, OK, SD, TX, WY)
- In-Person
- In-Person **after Deadline** (check state website for more details)
  - Only CA, CO, CT, DC, HI, ID, IL, IA, ME, MD, MI, MN, MT, NV, NH, NC, RI, UT, VT, WA, WI
- **vote.org**
Vote By Mail

Most states allow voters with chronic medical disabilities to vote by mail. To get your absentee ballot and see all other information for your state, click on your state in the first table in the next section to be taken to the vote.org state election center. You are able to use the absentee ballot tool on the vote.org website in all 50 states.

Updates - August 25, 2020
Mail in Ballot Rule Changes

*States with a star indicates that changes were made due to COVID-19*

- **States automatically mailing out ballots to all** registered voters
  - CA*, CO, DC*, HI, NV*, NJ, OR, UT, VT*, WA
- **States allowing mail-in voting for all** registered voters (this includes states that allow fear of COVID-19 as a justifiable reason)
- **States requiring a justification** to vote by mail (fear of COVID-19 is not an acceptable justification)
  - IN, LA, MS, SC, TN, TX

How to Vote Without Relying on the USPS

**Vote Early (in person)**
- Voting early provides voters the opportunity to cast their ballot in person without the crowds and lines that occur on election day.
- Early voting starts as early as 45 days before Election Day in some states.
  - For more information on state specific policies, refer to the Voting Outside the Polling Place category of the Resources section
- 41 states, as well as Washington D.C., allow early voting.
  - States that **do not** currently allow early voting:
    - AL, CT, KY, MS, MO, NH, PA, RI, SC

**Ballot Drop Box**
- Ballot drop boxes provide a secure location where voters can return their ballots. The boxes are directly taken to county election offices.
  - States that have **ballot drop boxes in some or all counties**
    - AZ, CA, CO, HI, KS, MT, NE, NM, OR, UT, WA

**Election Office/Polling Place Drop Off**
- Most states allow voters to return ballots in person at their local election office.
- Some states have alternative locations that voters can drop their ballots off

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at if they live too far from their local election office.

- States that allow voters to **drop off their ballots at any in person voting location** in their county
  - AZ, CA, CO, DC, HI, KS, MT, NM, NC, OR, UT, WA
- States that allow voters to **drop off their ballots at their assigned precinct polling place** on Election Day
  - NH, VT

- Some states allow voters to have someone else return their ballot.
  - For more information on state specific policies, refer to the **Voting Outside the Polling Place** category of the Resources section.

Recommendations for Mailing Your Ballot Using the USPS

**Vote Early**
- The **United States Postal Service** typically advises that you mail your ballot a minimum of 1 week before your state’s **official ballot return date**, preferably at least 2 weeks.

**Mark Your Calendar**
- Set reminders on your calendar to make sure you mail your ballot prior to the deadline.

**Track your Ballot**
- Most states provide a code on your ballot that you can use to track its location.
  - For more information on state specific policies and resources, refer to the **Ballot Tracking** category of the Links section.

**Don’t Wait**
- Ballots that are mailed late may not arrive in time for them to be counted under state law. The laws vary in each state.
  - Some states count ballots received on Election Day.
  - Some states count ballots if they are received by a certain time on Election Day.
  - Some states count ballots if they are postmarked by Election Day, as long as they are received a certain number of days after Election Day.
    - States that **count postmarked ballots if they arrive after election day**
      - AK, CA, DC, IA, IL, KS, MD, MS, NC, ND, NJ, NV, NY, OH, TX, UT, VA, WA, WV
    - For more information on state specific policies, refer to the **Voting Outside the Polling Place** category of the Resources section.
Important Information

- Absentee and vote-by-mail deadlines vary on a state-by-state basis. (see table)
- Some states allow those with disabilities to obtain a permanent absentee ballot status. These states are: CT, DE, KS, LA, MS, NV, NY, TN, WV, and WI.
- Additionally, some states allow any voter to obtain permanent absentee ballot status. These states are: AL, AZ, CA, MI, MN, NJ, and D.C.
- All disabled voters have the right to receive assistance marking their ballot from a family member, friend, or poll worker. This applies to absentee ballots as well.

Tips

- Request your absentee ballot early and take note of the return date.
- The United States Postal Service typically advises that you mail your ballot a minimum of 1 week before the official due date, preferably at least 2 weeks.
- If you need assistance voting, check your state regulations. Some states require witness(es) for the ballot and/or request form.
- If you need assistance voting, reach out ahead of time to whoever you would like to assist you. Give yourself adequate time to find a backup person.

Physical Absentee Ballot Request Deadlines

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Filling Out Your Vote by Mail Ballot

This information is from the County of Santa Clara Registrar of Voters in California. This information may be different for your county. The most important thing is carefully to read the instructions on your ballot. Please be sure to check your local election office website before filling out your ballot if you have any questions about the instructions on your ballot. If you do not know what your local election office is, you can find it using this directory from the US Vote Foundation.

How to Vote Your Ballot

- **Read the instructions on your ballot in their entirety.**
- Use a blue or black ink pen to mark your ballot.
- **DO NOT** sign or initial your official ballot.
- **DO NOT** use red ink.
- **DO NOT** vote for more candidates than the number indicated for each contest.
- To vote, **completely fill in the oval** to the right of your choice.
- To vote for a qualified write-in candidate, write the person's name in the write-in space and fill in the oval.
- **DO NOT** write-in a name that is already printed on the ballot.

How to Complete Your Return Envelope

- Refold the ballot and place it into the return envelope.
- **Sign your name by the red “X.”**
- **Print your address and the date on the back of the return envelope.**
- Your signature must match the signature on your voter registration card. This is not the time to just scribble!!
- If you are unable to sign your name on the return envelope you must personally make an “X” or distinguishing mark by the red “X” on the return envelope and you must have someone print your name on the return envelope and sign as a witness.

**IF YOUR SIGNATURE IS MISSING OR DOES NOT MATCH YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION CARD, YOUR BALLOT CANNOT BE COUNTED.**
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COVID-19 State Voting Information

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State Information for Voters with Disabilities

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