



## American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

# Vote By Mail

Across the country, an increasing number of states, cities, and counties are saving money while making it easier for their citizens to vote – without waiting in long lines or needlessly mandating voters do so in person. More and more governments are allowing their constituents to vote by mail.

The APWU enthusiastically supports this trend, which will encourage working people to exercise the most fundamental right of every citizen – the right to vote. We believe that voting in every election should be as convenient, fair, and secure as possible.

## Many Advantages to Voting By Mail

- *It increases voter participation;*
- *It is cost effective with less polling places and workers required;*
- *Creating a paper trail, voting by mail can improve the integrity of elections;*
- *It expands the timeframe within which ballots can be cast and counted;*
- *Mail balloting eliminates long lines;*
- *Voting by mail reduces the possibility of polling-place intimidation;*
- *It removes the obstacles that keep many from voting, such as having to leave work early or arrange daycare;*
- *There is no confusion about where to vote, and*
- *Ballots handled by the most trusted federal agency – the U.S. Postal Service*



## Voting By Mail Works

Twenty-seven states already allow voting by mail through no-excuse absentee voting, and they have found that voting by mail works. Three states (Oregon, Washington, and Colorado) conduct their elections entirely by mail. After adopting all-mail balloting for the 2014 elections, Colorado bucked the national trend of declining voter participation and substantially increased voter turnout. States with all-mail balloting routinely rank among the states with the highest rate of voter participation. When surveyed, 81 percent of Oregonians said they preferred voting by mail to traditional polling-place elections.

In California, seven years after instituting “permanent, no-excuse absentee registration,” which allows voters to choose to receive their ballots by mail, more than 50 percent of ballots cast in 2008 were submitted by mail. Other states have experienced a similar level of acceptance, along with increased participation.

Voting by mail can reduce election-related expenses and provide much needed relief to thinly stretched state and local budgets. A March 2013 special election highlighted the cost-effectiveness of voting by mail to San Diego County officials – they spent \$221 per in-person voter versus \$9 per mail voter. By reducing or eliminating the expenses of operating in-person voting polling places, the Montana Association of Clerks & Recorders estimates all-mail elections would save Montana taxpayers \$2 million per election cycle.

Studies have shown that adding the option of voting by mail does not give an advantage to any political party. Republicans and Democrats both benefit from comparable increases in participation when voters are given their choice of voting by mail. Support for mail-in balloting cuts across virtually every major demographic group – including age, race, income level, education, employment status, and political affiliation.

One of the most important features of mail-in balloting is the low incidence of fraud compared to other methods. Voting by mail gives election officials the ability to validate every voter’s signature and creates a verifiable paper trail. Increasing complaints about other balloting methods highlight the value of voting by mail.

Voting by mail enhances our democracy, giving American voters a choice that they need and deserve!