

FAQS ABOUT THE 2020 GENERAL ELECTION

- **The election is in November. Do I really need to request a mail-in (absentee) ballot now?**

Yes. Both your state and the U.S. Postal Service are expecting a huge uptick in the number of requests for mail-in ballots. While the USPS is confident it can meet demand, it has said that it could take up to 14 days for you to receive and return your request forms and ballots. So the earlier you send it, the more time that election offices and Secretary of State offices have to prepare and make sure that everyone who wants to vote by mail will be able to.

- **I'm hearing that the U.S. Postal Service might not be able to meet the demand for mail-in ballots. Should I plan on voting by mail?**

The US Postal Service has stated that it "has the capacity" to meet the demand, so if you can and are able to vote by mail, this should be your plan A. If for some reason you request your ballot and do not receive it, that's ok! Your plan B can be voting early at the Calvert County Board of Elections (new dates: **October 26 to November 2, including weekends, from 7 am to 8 pm**) to avoid crowds or voting on Election Day. You can still vote in-person if you requested a ballot but never received it or turned it in. **You may also drop your completed, signed ballot in a secure drop box or at a polling place on Election Day to ensure your vote will be counted. Calvert County will have five polling places – the Calvert County BOE and four other sites to be determined.**

- **What happens if I don't get my ballot in the mail in time?**

You can still vote! If you've requested your ballot, but you still haven't received it by October 10, you can call the Calvert County Board of Elections ("BOE") office (410-535-2214) to request a replacement. If you still don't receive it before Election Day, you can cast a provisional ballot at one of the five polling places. But the earlier that you request your ballot, the less of a chance you won't receive it.

- **Will my state let me vote by mail?**

Yes! Maryland allows no-excuse vote-by-mail for the 2020 General Election.

- **There are rumors that vote by mail is rife with fraud, is that true?**

This is simply not true. In the last 20 years, there has been an average of one case of absentee voter fraud per state, every six to seven years--a fraud rate of 0.00006%. In fact, our President and at least 16 members of his Administration and family have voted by mail. The military has used vote-by-mail for decades. Concerns about increased voter turnout have been raised, but we view high turnout as a good thing! So, request your ballot now.

- **Is my vote-by-mail request form the same as my ballot?**

No. Calvert County BOE will be mailing all active, registered voters an absentee (mail-in) ballot application between (approximately) August 24 and August 28 which MUST be

mailed back in the postage-paid envelope that will be provided. Once received by the BOE, a ballot will be mailed to you (approximately the first week of October) to complete and return in a postage-paid envelope.

- **What's the difference between absentee ballots and vote by mail ballots?**

Both are ways that voters can cast a ballot by voting at home and returning their ballot through the mail. While states like Washington, Oregon, Utah, Hawaii and Colorado conduct all-mail elections and automatically send registered voters a ballot, Maryland asks that you fill out a request form in order to have a ballot sent to you. That's called absentee voting. The only difference is whether or not you have to request a ballot yourself, but both are voting by mail processes.

THE GENERAL ELECTION IS A TWO-STEP PROCESS. DURING THE 2020 PRIMARY, VOTERS WERE MAILED THEIR BALLOTS WITHOUT HAVING TO APPLY FOR ONE.

- **What if I request a vote by mail ballot but I decide to vote on Election Day?**

Maryland will still allow you to vote in person but you will be asked to vote a provisional ballot. That ballot will count if the mail in ballot has not been received by the Calvert County BOE.

- **Will voting by mail give Republicans/Democrats an advantage?**

There is no evidence that voting by mail gives any party a clear advantage, and voting by mail is popular with the majority of Americans. Over 70% of Americans support allowing any voter who wants to vote by mail to do so.

- **I've heard that some ballots have been thrown out during the primaries. How do I make sure that my vote by mail ballot isn't rejected?**

Here are three things you need to do to make sure your ballot is counted.

1. Complete your absentee ballot application and return it to the Calvert County BOE in the postage-paid envelope as soon as you receive it.
2. When you receive your ballot, be sure to return it as early as possible in the postage-paid envelope that you will receive. **Maryland requires that ballots be postmarked by Election Day** and received by November 13. A secure drop box will be available at the Calvert County BOE and, possibly, one in the southern part and one in the northern part of the county (locations TBD).
3. Make sure the signature on your ballot matches the one on your voter registration form. States often check to see that they match, so carefully signing your mail-in ballot (oath) will keep it from being rejected. The oath must be signed for your ballot to count.

Information is courtesy of <https://votesaveamerica.com/everylastvote/> and edited by Let People Vote Southern Maryland to reflect facts about Maryland's 2020 General Election process.