



Voting by Mail is Secure

Myths	Facts
The system of voting by mail with absentee ballots invites fraud.	Research shows that a quarter of a million votes were cast by mail in the U.S. in the last 20 years. Only a few were fraudulent.
Election Officers mail ballots to people who are ineligible to vote.	In Virginia absentee ballots are mailed only to registered voters who apply for them. The return envelopes have bar codes that are matched to the list of registered voters in the state database.
Drop boxes can be stuffed with multiple copies of counterfeited ballots.	Drop boxes are always monitored and secured. Virginia does not have outdoor drop boxes at this time. If multiple copies of a ballot reach the Office of Elections, the counterfeit will be detected through several screening processes.
If the election results are not complete and announced on Election Night, the election will have been fraudulent	Elections are <u>usually</u> decided after election day. The media try to “call” them based on probability, but the results are not reliable until they are certified days later.
People can vote by mail in multiple states.	Virginia is a member of ERIC, a non-profit that combines several databases to help states to update their records to prevent double voting.
Organizations can collect many ballots and may not turn them in properly.	So-called ballot-harvesting by “third party” organizations unrelated to the voter is illegal in Virginia.
Election officials cannot find out what happens to ballots they have mailed out but not received back.	The Post Office has to return any undelivered envelopes to the Office of Elections. Ballots that aren’t returned by individuals won’t be counted, so they won’t affect the vote.
Absentee ballots can be stolen from home mailboxes	Stealing absentee ballots this way would not get a substantial number, even if it were likely. For extra precaution, voters can take their ballots to locked Post Office mailboxes.
Universal mail-in ballots are bad; absentee ballots are good.	“Universal” absentee ballots go out <u>only</u> to voters registered in a state, not to everyone.



Absentee voting allows vote buying and voter coercion.	Vote buying for elections has been effectively controlled by federal and state statutes. Voter coercion or persuasion would not be widespread.
Not all absentee ballots that are returned by mail may be counted.	Ballots are taken from their envelopes as they are received and fed into secure scanners for secrecy. The totals in the scanners will be tallied starting at 7:00 on election day and finishing after noon on Friday. A new law provides the extra days to complete the count. Even so, voters should apply for their ballots well before the deadline and return them 7 days before the election.
The number of COVID-19 cases has been exaggerated by the media to convince people to vote by mail.	Reliable, up-to-date data about the COVID-19 cases can be found on county and state health department websites and national websites such as the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center. Citizens can assess the risks in real time for themselves.

*Many studies show that fraud occurs but is not widespread. For example, data reviewed by the Brennan Center for Justice found that there were only 202 convictions for absentee ballot fraud out of 250,000,000 absentee ballots mailed from 2002 to 2018. That is 0.00008%.

Sources

The Brennan Center for Justice

Hasen, Richard. Research on vote buying

The Heritage Foundation

The National Conference of State Legislatures

The Washington Post

Virginia Department of Elections <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/> 804-864-8901

Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

Contact your local election office for further information on dates, deadlines for voter registration and applying for absentee ballots, and locations for early voting and polling places on election day.