



Overview

- Massachusetts just passed a vote by mail law <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/191/H4820>
 - The Senate and House both passed their own versions of the bill (H. 4829)
 - A conference committee negotiated the differences in each bill
 - H.4820 Signed by Governor Baker on July 6th
- \$8 million dollar bill
- All registered voters in Massachusetts are allowed to vote by mail in any 2020 election, no excuse or qualifications needed
 - Before this bill, people in MA were able to cast ballots by mail only if they were absentee, had physical disabilities, or religious beliefs that prevented them from voting at their polling places
 - This is the first time in Massachusetts history that all eligible residents can vote early and by mail in *both* the state primary and general election
- A Vote by Mail application will be mailed to every person who was registered by July 1st and who hasn't already requested an absentee ballot
 - Your application must be sent into your local election office by August 26th
 - Your ballot needs to be received by 8:00 PM EST on September 1st to be counted
- Election day for the State Primary is Tuesday, September 1st
 - Early voting will take place from August 22nd-August 28th
- Election day in November is Tuesday, November 3rd
 - Early voting will take place from October 17th-October 30th
- A second mailing will be sent out in September to every person who has not already applied for an absentee ballot or a Vote by Mail ballot
 - Your application must be sent into your local election office by October 28th
 - Your ballot needs to be postmarked by November 3rd and must reach your local election office by November 6th to be counted
 - If you mail your ballot from outside the country, it needs to be postmarked by November 3rd and must reach your local election office by November 13th to be counted

2020 Vote by Mail Application

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Voter Information

Name: _____
Address of Voter Registration: _____
1 Date of Birth: _____ Telephone Number: _____
E-mail Address: _____

Ballot Information

2 **Ballot Requested For:**
☐ September 1, 2020 Primary*
☐ November 3, 2020 Election
☐ All 2020 Elections*
*** Independents – Choose Your Primary Ballot:**
☐ Democratic
☐ Republican
☐ Green-Rainbow
☐ Libertarian
 Mail Ballot to: _____

Assistance (if applicable)

3 ☐ Voter required assistance in completing application due to physical disability.
 Assisting person's name: _____
 Assisting person's address: _____

Signed (under penalty of perjury): _____ Date: _____

Eligibility

Any registered voter may use this application to request a mail-in ballot for any election being held in 2020.

Completing the Application

1. Voter Information – Provide your name, the address where you are registered to vote, and date of birth. Telephone number and e-mail address are optional.
2. Ballot Information – Choose which election(s) in which you want to vote by mail. If you are voting by mail in the State Primary and you are Unenrolled (Independent), choose one party ballot. Also provide the address where you want the ballots mailed.
3. Assistance – If you are assisting a voter in completing this application, complete this section.
4. Sign your name – If you require assistance in signing the application, you may authorize someone to sign your name in your presence. That person must complete the assisting person's information in Section 3.

Submitting the Application

Send the completed application to the local election official at your city or town hall.
 Find contact information for local election officials at www.sec.state.ma.us/lel or by calling 1-800-462-VOTE (8683).
 Applications can be mailed or hand-delivered. Applications may also be submitted electronically by fax or e-mail, as long as your signature is visible.
 If you're applying for a State Primary ballot, this application must arrive at your local election office by August 26.
 For November 3 State Election ballots, the application must arrive by October 28.



- You can also download an application to request a Vote by Mail ballot at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/2020-Vote-by-Mail-Application.pdf>
- Required safety standards for polling places to let voters cast a vote in person
 - Social distancing parameters
 - Frequent use of sanitizers
 - Personal protective equipment
 - Use of marking pens
 - Proper notification of polling location changes (20 days in advance) and a report on how the polling location change could potentially impact voters based on race, national origin, disability, income, or age (3 days in advance)
- A recent Suffolk University poll for WGBH News, MassLive, The Boston Globe and the State House News Service
 - 24.8% of voters expect to vote by mail this fall
 - 61.4% said they would vote in person
 - ~12% said they were undecided
- Organizations that have pushed for this legislation - The Election Modernization Coalition (which includes Common Cause Massachusetts, MassVOTE, etc.)

Why it matters

- You *can* still vote in person on both September 1st and November 3rd, but this:
 - Expands voting options as we're still in a pandemic
 - Will reduce crowding at the polls and put less people at risk, particularly elderly and immunocompromised people
 - Expanded absentee ballot access

But what about...

- Voter Fraud? A myth! Also very rare!
 - Out of the over 250 million ballots that have been cast by mail nationwide in the last 20 years, there have only been 143 criminal convictions of voter fraud related to mail ballots
 - “~one case per state every six or seven years”
 - “Fraud rate of 0.00006%”
- Effect on one party over another? Not true! A Stanford University study finds that “claims that vote-by-mail fundamentally advantages one party over the other appear overblown,” (<https://siepr.stanford.edu/news/new-research-voting-mail-shows-neutral-partisan-effects>)

Reminders

- If you know you want to vote by mail, the sooner you send it, the better! Leave no room to have your vote not count!



- Make sure you're registered to vote!! You can check your registration and register here <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/OVR/>
- Check your local election office for more details!

Sources

- <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleev/early-voting-faq.htm>
- <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/covid-19/covid-19.htm>
- <https://boston.cbslocal.com/2020/07/06/massachusetts-vote-by-mail-bill-law-baker-galvin/>
- <https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/506110-massachusetts-governor-signs-bill-giving-all-residents-vote-by-mail>
- <https://www.wbur.org/npr/864899178/why-is-voting-by-mail-suddenly-controversial-heres-what-you-need-to-know>
- <https://thehill.com/opinion/campaign/494189-lets-put-the-vote-by-mail-fraud-myth-to-rest>
- <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/massachusetts-governor-signs-bill-allowing-all-voters-to-vote-by-mail/ar-BB16seCc?li=BBnbfcl>
- <https://www.masslive.com/coronavirus/2020/07/massachusetts-vote-by-mail-bill-heads-to-gov-charlie-bakers-desk.html>
- <https://www.masslive.com/coronavirus/2020/06/massachusetts-lawmakers-closer-to-bringing-early-mail-in-voting-options-to-2020-elections.html>
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- <https://www.masslive.com/politics/2020/07/massachusetts-approves-vote-by-mail-voters-will-get-applications-in-the-fall-now-that-voting-reform-bill-is-law.html>