

Reform for Illinois—Proposed Legislative Language on Accessibility of Vote by Mail Ballots (Developed in Partnership with Equip for Equality and the Illinois Council for the Blind)

Accessibility of vote by mail ballots. It is the intent of the Legislature that voting by mail shall be fully accessible to all voters, including voters having a disability, pursuant to all applicable Federal and state laws. The State Board of Elections shall work with the election authorities and the disability community to develop and implement procedures and technologies, which will include procedures for providing vote by mail ballots, upon request, in alternative formats that will allow all voters to cast a secret, independent, and verifiable vote by mail ballot without the assistance of another person. These procedures and technologies shall include, but not be limited to, an accessible electronic ballot marking tool that will enable voters to mark their ballot privately and independently. "Electronic Ballot Marking Tool" means a system that allows a voter to receive a blank ballot to mark electronically, print and then cast by returning the printed ballot to the election authority. The State Board of Elections and Election Authorities shall also work to implement other methods for voters to return the ballot to the election authority when completed, including but not limited to secure email portals. These systems shall conform to the Illinois Information Technology Accessibility Act, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1AA and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) report "Principles and guidelines for remote ballot marking systems", so long as the technology is consistent with industry standard.