

Mail Voting Messaging Guidance

This message guide is intended to build trust in our elections in spite of disinformation about mail voting. It is based on our own messaging research, as well as input from partners across the pro-democracy sector.

NOTE: This resource is for 501(c)(3)-compliant purposes only. It is not to be used for any partisan, political, or electioneering activities by any organization. **You should consult with your counsel prior to and in connection with your use of this.**

Key Narrative

1. Unifies as Americans	Many people look to American elections as models of freedom, fairness, and checks and balances. As citizens, we have a voice that many people around the world do not.
2. Builds Trust with Examples of Checks and Balances and the Many People Involved	We have an election coming up. Like past elections, many Americans will be voting early and by mail. It's important that our elections hold firm to all of our checks and balances. Early and mail voting offers secure options for our fellow Americans to ensure they have the freedom to make their voice heard on their own time. And just like those who vote on Election Day, voters who cast their ballot early or by mail have their identity and eligibility verified by teams of local officials.
3. Closes with a Call to Action	As Americans, let's reject division and fear. Let's protect our checks and balances. Let's choose truth over clickbait. Proof over accusations. People over politics. Country over party.

Key Points About Mail Voting

- Our election system is made up of rigorous checks and balances to ensure our elections are secure and every verified ballot is counted.
- Just like voting on Election Day, voters who cast their ballot early or by mail have their identity and eligibility verified by teams of local officials. Voters who cast their ballot by mail will often have their identity and eligibility verified twice; once when applying for their ballot and again when returning their ballot to be counted.
- Early and mail voting offers secure options for our fellow Americans to ensure they have the freedom to make their voice heard on their own time. These options can also reduce wait times for voters who prefer to cast their ballots in person on Election Day.

The Basics: How To Talk About Mail Voting

When talking about mail voting:

- Emphasize checks and balances that keep system secure
- Depending on the audience, emphasis impacted communities that need access to mail voting: seniors, people with disabilities, students, etc.
- Emphasize freedom to vote on their own time/schedule
- Highlight mail voting is used by Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike

When talking about drop boxes:

- Emphasize security protocols (monitoring, locations, checks)
- Refer to “secure drop boxes”
- Note that when ballots are returned in secure drop boxes, they are handled directly by election officials and no one else.

Tough Questions about Mail Voting

Q: How do we know ballots are not tampered with during the counting process?

A: Our local election officials go through a series of checks and balances to ensure that every vote is verified and counted in a secure and transparent manner. In many states, the ballot transportation, handling, and counting processes are overseen by a team of bipartisan observers.

Q: Why shouldn't everyone just be required to vote on Election Day?

A: For many decades, mail voting has helped everyday Americans such as seniors, people with disabilities, voters who live in rural areas, and those who cannot vote in person on

Election Day, be able to make their voice heard. Additionally, allowing voters to cast their ballot early or by mail lessens wait times for voters and capacity concerns for local election officials on Election Day.

Q: Does mail voting favor one party over the other?

A: There is no evidence that mail voting — or any voting method for that matter — specifically favors one political party or another. Every eligible American, regardless of their political beliefs, has a right to make their voice heard. How they choose to do that is up to them in accordance with the laws of the state they live in.

Q: Is mail voting more likely to lead to fraud?

A: Mail voting has been secure in the United States for well over a century, dating back to the Civil War. Today, teams of local election officials follow a rigorous set of checks and balances to keep all aspects of our elections secure, including mail voting. From the moment a voter turns in their voter registration application their identity is checked and verified, which happens again when they cast a ballot. After their ballot is completed and turned in, it is processed, inspected, counted, and checked again.

Q: Are ineligible noncitizens voting by mail?

A: Only U.S. citizens can legally vote in federal elections and state elections. That's the law everywhere in the country. Every state has a strong set of checks and balances to ensure only eligible citizens vote. Teams of election officials cross-check federal and state databases every time someone submits a voter registration application to make sure only U.S. citizens are registered and can vote.

Q: What is ballot curing? Is it legitimate or does it open the door to fraud?

A: The process of ballot curing is when eligible voters are able to fix simple, common mistakes on their ballot envelope, such as a missing signature. This process actually increases security in our elections because it allows local election officials another opportunity to verify the voters' identity. That's why states across the political spectrum — from Texas to California — have a cure system in place.

Voting Rights Lab is a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) nonprofit, state-focused organization with a national perspective. Our comprehensive election policy analysis, research, and data provide uniquely actionable insights to our partners and the public.

Secure Democracy USA is a nonpartisan, 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization building stronger elections, state by state. We advocate for practical election policy solutions guided by research and supported across the ideological spectrum.