



New Normal for Voting in 2020

Information from Lutheran Engagement & Advocacy in Nevada (LEAN)

In LEAN's last bulletin, we explained that although the primary election was all by mail and went well, **all-mail elections are not the new normal in Nevada**, and if voters want to continue mailing their ballots, they have to request an absentee ballot, and they can make that request permanent. Well, as we all know, **these are not normal times, so election procedures have changed again.**

The second Special Session of the Nevada Legislature passed AB 4, and there's a lot of confusion about it. Here's what you need to know:

- 1. If you requested an absentee ballot, you don't need to do anything.** You will receive a paper ballot that you can mark and return, either by mail or by delivering it to the County Registrar. Also, there's another option, explained below.
- 2. If you have not requested an absentee ballot, you'll get a mail-in ballot anyway.** As we said, these are not normal times, and AB 4 authorizes all-mail elections in times when the Governor has declared a state of emergency. Such a state is in place as preparations are made for the election, so the emergency rule of mail for everyone applies. However **if we ever do get back to "normal" times, we go back to the regular rules, and voting by mail will be via absentee ballot only.**
- 3. Only active, registered voters will receive a ballot in the mail. This is different from the primary,** and designed to save the cost of sending ballots that are undeliverable or will not be used. **A registered voter is one whose information is on file with the County Registrar,** whose identity was verified at registration, etc. **An active voter is one whose address is valid.** So it is possible to be a registered voter but not be active because the Registrar does not have a good address for you. There is a place on the Secretary of State website to check your address and correct anything that's wrong. Go to <https://www.nvsos.gov/votersearch/>. **Active is not related to when you last voted, so if you did not vote in the primary, or haven't voted for years, you'll still get a ballot in the mail so long as you're registered and your address is good.**
- 4. Although it's very much discouraged, you can ask someone to hand deliver or mail your ballot for you.** Anyone can do this—you don't have to be disabled and it doesn't have to be a family member who does it for you. However if the helper fails to deliver the ballot, or does it after November 3rd, you're out of luck—your vote doesn't count.
- 5. There will still be in-person voting sites, just like there were for the primary.** AB 4 addresses the long lines at the polls in June by setting a minimum number of locations **for both early voting and on election day.** Clark County will have at least 35 early voting in person locations, and at least

100 vote centers on election day. (According to the Secretary of State, Clark is planning 159 centers.) Washoe County is required to have at least 15 early voting locations and 25 vote centers on election day. The smaller counties must have at least one early voting site and at least one vote center on election day.

6. There has been a lot of concern about voter fraud. The Secretary of State has set up elaborate procedures that are uniform across the state to combat this. Every voter's signature is on file with the Secretary of State. Every voter must sign the transmittal envelope when they return their ballot. The two are compared before the ballot is counted, and if they don't match, a letter goes out. If you get such a letter, it's important to respond, and you can do so online and several other ways. Failure to "cure" a question about whether it was you who filled out the ballot will result in the ballot being disqualified. People have wondered whether a person could vote by mail and then go to a polling site and vote again. Procedures to prevent multiple votes have been in place for a long time. When you check in at a polling site, they call up your name on a statewide database, and if you already mailed a ballot or already voted across town, it will show up.

7. It is not true that there is a grace period to mail a ballot after November 3rd. Ballots must be postmarked (or delivered) not later than November 3rd. The Registrar will continue to accept mailed ballots for three days after election day, but only those bearing a November 3rd postmark. The grace period is to allow the post office to do its part.

There is a lot of misinformation circulating. LEAN encourages everyone to be engaged with the candidates and the issues, but avoid spreading confusion about the process. Anyone who has concerns should call or visit their County Registrar, which for Clark County is https://www.clarkcountynv.gov/government/departments/elections/services/voter_registration/index.php or look at the Secretary of State website at <https://www.nvsos.gov/sos/>. That's the place for authoritative, up-to-date information. (We hope you will see fit to share this article, too.) The main thing is **do vote, and do so not later than November 3rd!**