

# VOTE HOME

Higher Turnout | Highly Secure | Lower Cost

## A secure time-tested way to put voters first

Voters get their ballot delivered to them weeks before Election Day, fill it out at their convenience, then return it either in-person or by mail.

In the 2018 midterm election, a full 69% of ALL votes cast in the West were from mailed-out ballots - from states red, purple and blue.

## It serves everyone

Good for: Seniors or disabled voters who might have trouble getting to the polls; Rural voters far from a polling place; A single parent working two jobs; First responders whose schedules can be preempted; A family with sick kids; An unexpected trip; Anyone facing bad weather.

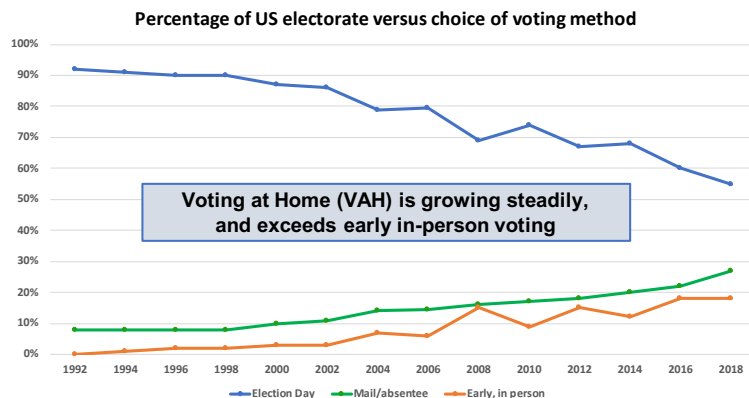
## Secure and Efficient

Relies on paper ballots that can't be electronically hacked, with a full audit trail. Saves on poll workers and hundreds of polling place machines that need to be maintained and replaced.



## An increasing trend toward mailed-out ballot use

Since 2000, more than a quarter of a billion votes have been cast via ballots delivered directly to the voter. In the 2018 midterm, about 27% of all 118 million votes were cast this way. The percentage is growing every cycle. Soon, in-person voting on Election Day will be less than 50% to the total.



Sources: 1992-2016:: MIT Election Lab. 2018: PEW Research

## Best practices make a big difference

In addition to automatic ballot delivery to all active registered voters, best practices in VAH systems include features to ensure voter confidence and election integrity.

- Multiple return options including postage-paid return envelopes, secure multiple drop-off locations, staffed vote centers, accessible voting options.
- Ballot tracking for both the voter and elections officials.
- Signature verification on each return ballot envelope, with effective cure processes.
- Proactive registration address updates (AVR, USPS NCOA).
- Strong penalties for anyone who subverts the process.

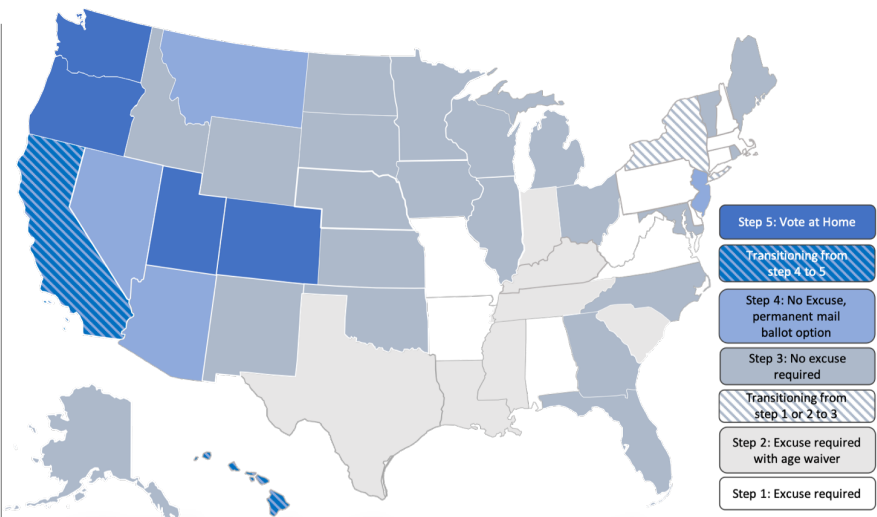
## Higher engagement

**In the 2018 midterm, the 100% VAH states saw turnout over 10 percentage points higher than the national average.** States that employ higher levels of mailed-out ballots see higher levels of voter engagement - in primaries as well as general elections.

Local elections see an even more dramatic uplift.

Lower propensity voters, often younger or minority, see a strong positive increase in engagement.

Vote at Home Status by State – August 2019



VAH has gained traction among states, counties, and municipalities as a way to improve access while preserving election security and integrity, and reduce cost.

- Five states currently use VAH statewide: Colorado, Oregon, Utah, Washington, plus Hawaii in 2020.
- Other states are moving in the same direction. California is rolling out, targeting 2022. Arizona and Montana are at 70% "permanent absentee."
- Nebraska and North Dakota have multiple counties on VAH. Alaska, Maryland, and New Mexico are providing it for some municipal elections.

## A safe, gradual path toward implementation

History has shown VAH can be rolled out gradually, allowing both voters and elections officials to adopt and adapt gracefully. The process usually starts with a move from "excuse required" absentee ballots to "no excuse." States may then allow for voters to sign up to be on a "permanent absentee" list and get their ballots delivered automatically, unless they move out of state or change their mind.

Ultimately, states may pilot a VAH program in a few municipalities or counties and with success allow all counties to roll out 100% mailed-out ballots, as happened in Utah and Washington. Or once the "permanent absentee" list grows to over 70% of the electorate, it often makes economic sense to switch to a full VAH model, as Colorado did. More at: [www.voteathome.org/guide](http://www.voteathome.org/guide) & [www.voteathome.org/library](http://www.voteathome.org/library)

## Levels of Mailed-Ballot Delivery Models

Vote at Home represents the highest, most-developed level of mailed-ballot election systems. There are essentially five levels of mailed-ballot systems in the US today, ranging in the intensity of adoption from states requiring a specific, limited-reason excuse for voters to qualify for a ballot delivered to them to systems where the ballot is sent automatically to every active registered voter.

- **Level 1 - Excuse Required Absentee Ballot:** Each voter must provide an excuse, from a list of acceptable excuses, to qualify for a ballot to be sent to them. In practice, few jurisdictions actually check on the listed excuses for validity. Instead, it becomes an administrative and record keeping exercise, if those records are even kept. States in this category: AL, AR, CT, DE, MA, MO, NH, NY<sup>1</sup>, PA, VA, WV.
- **Level 2 - Excuse Required, But with Age Exemption:** Each voter must provide an excuse as in Level 1, but that requirement is waived for voters over a specified age (usually 60 or 65). States in this category: IN, KY, LA, MS, TN, TX, SC.
- **Level 3 - No Excuse Absentee Ballot:** Voters can qualify for a mail-delivered “absentee” ballot without offering an excuse. However, the voter must request a ballot for every election, or about once per year, thus burdening the voter to remember the rules and election dates when they need to request a ballot and generating a steady flow of paperwork for elections officials. States in this category: AK, FL, GA, ID, IL, IA, KS, ME, MD, MI, MN, NE<sup>2</sup>, NM, NC, ND<sup>3</sup>, OH, OK, RI, SD, VT, WI, WY.
- **Level 4 - Permanent Absentee Status:** The state allows the voter to request absentee status only once to automatically get a ballot delivered each election (unless they opt out). This model eliminates the voter’s need to take any additional action and reduces election administrators’ paperwork. This model requires elections officials to maintain a database of permanent mailed-ballot voters, typically making address changes automatically using state databases and the Postal Service’s National Change of Address (NCOA) file. States in this category: AZ, CA<sup>4</sup>, MT, NV, NJ.
- **Level 5: A full VAH state or jurisdiction:** Every active registered voter automatically gets a ballot delivered, for every election. This model dramatically simplifies election management, lowering the need to staff and train poll workers because of their reduced use. This model also saves significant money that otherwise would be needed for periodic upgrades to the large number of polling place voting machines and other equipment. States in this category: CO, OR, UT, WA, HI (2020). In some other states, certain counties and municipalities have been given this option over the last few years as well.

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<sup>1</sup> NY passed the first step in a constitutional amendment process for “no excuse” absentee.

<sup>2</sup> NE has 11 counties signed up to conduct their 2020 election by mailed-out ballot.

<sup>3</sup> ND has 30 counties that mail-out ballots to all eligible voters.

<sup>4</sup> CA has 15 counties moving to all mailed-out ballots for 2020, with the rest targeting 2022.

## Key Measures of Vote at Home's Effectiveness<sup>5</sup>

### Vote at Home consistently increases turnout

- Turnout 10 percentage points higher in the 2018 midterms (60% vs. 50% - vs. voting eligible population). Turnout 10 percentage points higher in 2016 general election (82% vs. 72% for active registered voters). Turnout 17 percentage points higher in 2014 mid-terms (65% vs. 48% for active registered voters).
- In 2018 primaries, the eight VAH "centric" states (100% and >60% absentee) witnessed more than 15 percentage points higher turnout (37.5% vs. 22%).

### Local elections see significant turnout boost

- After mailing ballots to all active registered voters, in local municipal elections in New Mexico, turnout was triple historical numbers. The same tripling happened in St. George, Utah. Anchorage, Alaska, saw exceptional turnout results in its first municipal election conducted that way, as did the counties in Nebraska that opted-in during the 2018 mid-terms.
- On the heels of Michigan passing "no excuse" absentee in 2018, Lansing, MI, saw over 75% of ballots cast in its municipal election come from those mailed to voters. New Jersey passed its "permanent absentee" law in 2018 and Camden, NJ, saw its municipal election have over 50% of all votes cast come from mailed-out ballots.

### VAH engages not just voters overall, but especially lower propensity voters

- 2016 Utah general election: 10 percentage points higher with millennials. 2014 mid-term: Averaged more than 6 percentage points higher with Latinx.
- 2016 Utah: 5.5 percentage points increase in down-ballot voting.

### VAH is a non-partisan issue

- The eight current VAH-centric states are red, purple and blue (AZ, CA, CO, HI, MT, OR, UT, WA) with more joining (AK, ND, NE).

### VAH saves money by removing polling-place operating cost and excess polling machines

- PEW research on Colorado 2014 showed a \$6 savings per voter per election. Other jurisdictions are reporting \$2-\$5 savings per voter per election.
- Orange County, CA expects to save \$29 million by moving to VAH in 2020.

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<sup>5</sup> Data from US Elections Project, US EAC, L2, Media reports, NVAHI research