



HB 130: Vote-By-Mail
Increase Voter Participation
Enhance Voter Protection
Save Taxpayer Money



Vote-By-Mail Increases Voter Participation

- ✓ **VOTERS HAVE MORE FLEXIBILITY IN DECIDING WHEN THEY CAST THEIR BALLOT.**
 - Ballots are mailed 25 days before Election Day.
- ✓ **VOTERS HAVE MORE WAYS IN WHICH THEY CAN CAST THEIR BALLOT.**
 - Ballots can be mailed, can be dropped off at conveniently located drop sites up to 25 days before Election Day, can be returned to Staffed Places of Deposit on Election Day, can be delivered to the county election office, or can be voted in person in a voting booth at the county election office.
- ✓ **VOTERS HAVE MORE TIME TO CONSIDER THE CHOICES ON A BALLOT, AND MAKE MORE INFORMED DECISIONS.**
 - As a result, all voters may be more likely to complete their entire ballot, versus voting in only the top few races and leaving the remaining races and ballot issues blank.
- ✓ **VOTERS HAVE MORE TIME TO RESOLVE REGISTRATION ISSUES.**
 - Since ballots are mailed to each active and provisionally registered voter, voters who do not receive a ballot have plenty of time to work out the problem, especially with Montana's fail-safe late registration system.

Vote-By-Mail Enhances Voter Protection

✓ **REDUCED RISK OF VOTER FRAUD:**

- The potential for a voter to be issued and vote more than one ballot is removed in a Vote-By-Mail system, because the statewide voter file does not allow more than one active ballot to be issued to a voter.
 - A polling place election does not offer this high level of reliability, because ballots are issued by poll workers who do not have access to the statewide voter file.
- The same system will be used when processing requests for replacement ballots.

✓ **VOTER SIGNATURE IS CHECKED AND VERIFIED BEFORE A VOTED BALLOT QUALIFIES FOR TABULATION:**

- Each ballot return envelope signature is analyzed and then approved or rejected by trained election officials.

✓ **BALLOT ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES ARE REQUIRED OF EACH COUNTY:**

- County election officials document ballots from the time of receipt through tabulation, using tamper-proof numbered seals and seal logs.
- Vote-By-Mail allows greater security over both ballots and tabulation equipment because both remain at the election office where election officials have greater control over chain of custody.

✓ **VOTERS MUST AFFIRM VOTING ELIGIBILITY IN WRITING:**

- Each time a voter casts a ballot through Vote-By-Mail, they must sign and affirm their qualification to vote – including affirming that they are a Montana resident, and that they have not previously voted a ballot for the same election.
 - Voters at a polling place have no such requirement to affirm their eligibility to vote in the election.

✓ **ENHANCED STATEWIDE ATTENTION TO VOTER PROTECTION:**

- A state structured solely for mail balloting can concentrate on putting enhanced security procedures in place, unlike the current voting process where local election officials often are spread too thin and have too many Election Day responsibilities to concentrate solely on security procedures.

Vote-By-Mail Saves Taxpayer Money

✓ COST SAVINGS TO ALL COUNTY GOVERNMENTS:

- **County governments could save more than \$2 Million per election cycle by administering Vote-By-Mail only elections** (*Cost savings estimate provided by the Montana Association of Clerks & Recordors*).
 - Vote-By-Mail eliminates the need for poll workers.
 - No recruitment; no notices to be sent; no poll worker training to conduct; no distribution and retrieval of Election Day supplies; no last-minute cancellations from workers who had agreed to serve; no paychecks to cut and mail; no W-2's to send; no pre-dawn Election Day hours to line up replacement workers; no poll worker meals to provide.
 - Vote-By-Mail eliminates the need for polling places.
 - No polling place leases, telephones, and utilities; no polling place improvements; no frantic phone calls about locked doors; no preparation, set-up, tear-down, or emergency repairs of voting machines or devices; no confusion about where people must go to vote.
 - Vote-By-Mail eliminates the need for polling place equipment.
 - Creates savings on programming, pre and post election testing, maintenance and support contracts.
 - Vote-By-Mail reduces equipment replacement costs.
 - Vote-By-Mail reduces the need for temporary election office employees during election season.