



Absentee Ballots are a thing of the past – Now “Mail-In Ballots” and some new rules

In June the “Vote by Mail” law was enacted, changing the rules for what was formerly known the absentee ballot. First, the term "absentee" ballot has been replaced with the term "mail-in" ballot, but there are additional changes affecting voters and the work that League members do.

Prior to the new law, only a voter who was permanently disabled could apply using one application to receive ballots for all elections in one calendar year. A voter could also request an application (not a ballot) be sent to them for all November general elections. Both of those options have changed.

The first new option (Option A) allows any voter to request all of the eligible ballots for the calendar year with a single application, without the “permanently disabled” requirement.

The second new option (Option B) allows any voter to request a ballot (not an application) sent to them for all general elections with a single application. The voter selecting this option will receive ballots for every November general election until or unless the voter requests the County Clerk’s Office to discontinue sending the ballots.

The rules for authorized messengers have also changed. With the new law any voter can now apply for, and obtain, a mail-in ballot by way of an authorized messenger. Use of the authorized messenger is no longer limited to “sick or confined” voters. However, authorized messengers can only apply for, and obtain, mail-in ballots (not applications) for ten voters in an election.

What you need to know in bullet form:

- You can still get a “Mail-In” ballot for any reason.
- Mail-In ballots are now good for a variety of durations. If you so choose, you may get a mail-in ballot:
 - for all elections to be held during the remainder of the calendar year; or
 - for all future November general elections until otherwise requested.
- Authorized Messengers:
 - Cannot be candidate in the election.
 - Must be a family member or a registered voter in that county.
 - Cannot serve as messenger for more than TEN qualified voters per election.
 - Must sign each mail-in ballot application and show a photo ID in the presence of the County Clerk or County Clerk designee.