

COLORADO



Mail Ballot 'Gold Standard'

Coloradans likely won't have to worry about waiting in long lines or contracting the coronavirus at crowded polling sites because nearly all of them will mail in their ballots, if past practices hold. Every registered voter in the state will be sent a ballot before the Nov. 3 general election.

The universal mail-ballot system, implemented in 2013, is considered the gold standard for elections in the United States, said Secretary of State Jena Griswold (D), and is a model that other states are looking to copy.

"We're in the middle of a pandemic, so it is even more important to be able to vote right from home," she said.

Voters can choose to return their ballots by mail or at drop boxes or vote centers before the 7 p.m. Election Day deadline. In-person voting is also available at the centers from Oct. 26 through Election Day, Nov. 3. Those voters should wear masks, bring hand sanitizer and practice social distancing.

"We tend to have long ballots in Colorado, and to be able to sit down and find informa-

tion and make up my mind is a real plus," said Gerry Cummins, 77, of Centennial, who believes she hasn't missed an election in about 50 years.

"Our model shows that if you make voting accessible, people will participate," Griswold said.

Since the universal mail-ballot system was implemented, overall voter participation has risen by 9 percent. The increase didn't favor either major political party—the number of Democratic and Republican voters increased at the same rate. Colorado's system is consid-

ered one of the most secure in the nation. "Frankly put, a paper ballot cannot be hacked," Griswold said. Equipment used for in-person voting includes a voter-verified paper trail.

Statewide initiatives on the ballot include one to prohibit abortions after 22 weeks, another to reintroduce gray wolves to the state, higher tax-

es on nicotine and e-cigarettes, and pledging Colorado's votes in the electoral college to the winner of the national vote for president, not necessarily the highest vote-getter in the state.

"I would encourage everyone to follow the issues and stay abreast of the information," said Cummins, who is on the board of the League of Women Voters of Colorado.

—*Cynthia Pasquale*

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—*Jena Griswold,*
secretary of state

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

IMPORTANT DATES

Oct 26–Nov 2: Early voting

Nov. 3: Election Day

VOTING RULES AND OPTIONS

- Register at GoVoteColorado.gov.
- To register in person or online, you will need a valid Colorado driver's license or state-issued identification.
- If you're eligible to vote in Colorado but have not yet registered, you can do so and cast your ballot at the vote center in your county through Election Day.
- Every registered voter will be mailed a ballot.
- To check the status of your mail ballot, visit GoVoteColorado.gov. You can also contact your county clerk and recorder's office for further questions.
- Valid photo identification is required to vote.
- You can vote in person at vote centers from Monday, Oct. 26, through Tuesday, Nov. 3.
- Locations for the vote centers and for ballot drop boxes are listed at GoVoteColorado.gov.
- Polling places will have hand sanitizer and practice social distancing.
- This year polls are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

RESOURCES

- Go to sos.state.co.us for names of candidates and vote totals.
- For AARP Colorado updates, go to aarp.org/coloradovotes.
- Follow AARP Colorado on Facebook at facebook.com/aarpcolorado and on Twitter at twitter.com/aarpco.
- Stay updated on the 2020 election at aarp.org/election2020.
- For information on races and campaigns, visit Ballotpedia.org.

FOCUS ON DECISION DAY

U.S. Senate: Incumbent Cory Gardner (R) vs. former Gov. John Hickenlooper (D)
U.S. House of Representatives: All seven House seats
State Legislature: 18 seats in the Senate and all 65 representatives

Nursing homes: Responding to the high death toll from COVID-19, what can be done to improve nursing home conditions and oversight?
Prescription drugs: What actions should government take, if any, to prevent large increases in prescription drug prices?

Colorado was **one of the first states** to mail every voter an absentee ballot. In the 2016 presidential election, **70 percent** of eligible Coloradans voted. That's compared with a **60 percent** turnout nationally.