

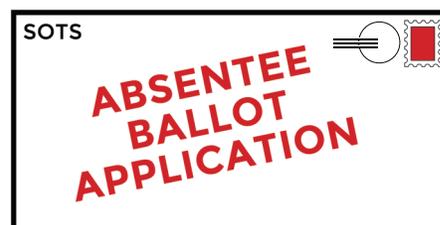


# ROVAC'S 2020 PRIMARY UPDATE: VOTING DURING A PANDEMIC

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There have been many changes to everyday life as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including to the most meaningful act of citizenship in our country—voting.

- In April, Gov. Ned Lamont made the prudent decision to postpone Connecticut's Presidential Primary to align with the already scheduled August 11, 2020 date for the state primary. (Executive Order 7-BB)
- In May, the Governor allowed all eligible Connecticut residents to apply to vote in the August primary by absentee ballot—paving the way for the Secretary of the State to mail absentee ballot applications from her office to all the people registered with a political party on the state's 169 Municipal Voter Registry Lists. Those wishing to vote in-person can still do so at their polling location. (Executive Order 7-QQ)



**The temporary changes to our primary will be new and unfamiliar to many.** As the bipartisan guardians of our state's elections, Connecticut's Registrars of Voters have prepared this fact sheet on how Connecticut's local voter rolls are maintained—and how the new, temporary changes to our voting system will affect the August primary.



**Connecticut's Registrars of Voters encourage all registered members of the Republican and Democratic Parties to participate in this year's primary. If you have questions about your voting status, polling location or the election itself, please contact one of your local Registrars of Voters!**

## CHANGES IN VOTING

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- Under Connecticut law, **there are two steps to follow if you plan to vote with an absentee ballot in the 2020 Primary**. You must first submit an *application* for an absentee ballot to your Town Clerk and then, once received, return your completed *absentee ballot* to your Town Clerk by August 11th.
- This year the Secretary of the State's Office mailed an **application** for an absentee ballot to **every registered Democrat and Republican on the Municipal Voter Registry Lists**. (Connecticut's major political parties do not allow unaffiliated voters to participate in primaries.)
- Under the Governor's executive order, every eligible primary voter in Connecticut has the right to vote by absentee ballot in the Democratic and Republican Primaries, **as long as the ballot is received by your Town Clerk by 8 p.m. on August 11th**.
- An absentee ballot will be mailed to every voter **who returned their application** to the local Town Clerk.
- **Absentee ballot drop boxes have been made available to every municipality** to allow contactless casting and delivery of absentee ballots. Contact your Town Clerk for the exact location.
- Absentee voters can also choose to mail their ballot to the Town Clerk **via the specific return envelope that will be provided with your ballot**. However, by state law your ballot must be received by August 11th in order to count!
- If you have already voted by absentee ballot, but then decide to vote in-person instead, **you have until 10 a.m. on August 11th to inform your Town Clerk, and you must inform them in-person**.

## MAKE SURE YOUR VOTE IS COUNTED: IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW!

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**Connecticut law has specific qualifications for counting absentee ballots.**

- **Return your absentee ballot application to your Town Clerk ASAP!** You will not receive an absentee ballot until your application has been received by your Town Clerk. If you wait too long before August 11th you may not receive your ballot in time to vote. You will then be required to vote in-person at your polling location.
- **Your absentee ballot will not be counted if it arrives after August 11th—and, under state law, the postmark DOES NOT COUNT!** Ensure that your absentee ballot is in your Town Clerk's hands by August 11th. Your ballot will not be counted otherwise. You can use your town's drop box up until 8 p.m. on August 11th.
- **You must use the specific return envelope provided with your absentee ballot—and do not share envelopes!** If you use an incorrect envelope, or use the same return envelope as another member of your household to send multiple ballots, your votes will not be counted.

## WHAT IF I DIDN'T RECEIVE MY ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATION?

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The Secretary of the State's Office has sent an application for an absentee ballot to every eligible Democratic and Republican primary voter on each Municipal Voter Registry List. **If you did not receive an application, contact your Registrars of Voters immediately.**

# PROTECTING YOUR ACTIVE VOTER STATUS

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**Registering to vote should be easy,  
removing someone's name from the voter rolls should be hard.**

This is why state law restricts the ways in which a voter can be removed from the rolls. Peoples' lives change all the time: some move, some get married, some unfortunately pass away. And with that, their registration status can change.

**To protect your voting rights, election laws are in place so that Registrars of Voters can only remove your name from their municipality's Voter Registry List upon confirmation of:**

## **DEATH:**

A Registrar must have first received a notice from the Registrar of Vital Statistics reporting the death of a town resident or found an obituary in the local news.

## **CHANGE IN RESIDENCY:**

**A Registrar must have received:**

- Written confirmation from the resident
- Confirmation of a change in residency via a signed Notice of Confirmation of Voting Residence
- A cancelation form from another town via the CT voter registration system or written notification from another state
- A notice of a change in residency from the Dept. of Motor Vehicles

## **IMPRISONMENT:**

A Registrar must have received notice from the Secretary of the State or Dept. of Corrections that a resident has been convicted of a felony and thus loses their right to vote.

## **BY A VOTER'S OWN REQUEST:**

A registered voter can request their own removal from their local Voter Registry List by mail.

## **INACTIVITY:**

A Registrar can move a voter to what's called the "Inactive List" when it's believed a resident has moved out of town and has not responded to requests from Registrars to confirm their continued residency at a specific location.

**Otherwise, your name remains on that municipality's Voter Registry List.** If you did not receive an absentee ballot application, it may be because one of these scenarios was not reported to the Registrars of Voters.

Your absentee ballot application may have been deemed "Undeliverable" by the USPS and returned to sender—in this case, to the Secretary of the State's Office in Hartford. There it will be sorted and sent back to that municipality's Registrar so they may add your name to the 2021 "NCOA" Canvass of Voters.

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**This is why we encourage residents to check your voter status ASAP by visiting the Secretary of the State's website at [portal.ct.gov/SOTS](https://portal.ct.gov/SOTS) and, if you did not receive an absentee ballot application, to contact your Registrar of Voters!**

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# ENSURING A SUCCESSFUL, SECURE AND SAFE PRIMARY

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Connecticut's Registrars of Voters are a diverse, bipartisan group of local officials in every city and town who guide residents through the election process—starting with registration and ending with casting a vote.

Like many of the changes we have had to make since the outbreak of COVID-19, the temporary rules for Connecticut's August primary will be a whole new ball game—and this experiment will provide an insightful “scrimmage” prior to the November 3rd Presidential Election.



Depending on the total return of absentee ballots, and if a tight race were to occur, results across voting districts may not be instantaneously available due to election laws on results reporting. We hope candidates and the public will bear with your state's elections team—the Secretary of the State's Office, Town Clerks and the Registrars of Voters—as we work our way through this new challenge.

As further modifications are debated, the state's Registrars of Voters look forward to continuing our work with the Secretary of the State's Office and elected officials by lending our experienced perspective on the most effective ways to administer an election during a pandemic.



**For more information from the Registrars of Voters  
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