

Vote by Mail

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What is Vote by Mail?

- o Utah State Code § 20A-3-302, 605
- o The county/city prepares and mails a ballot to every **registered** voter
- o Voters can mail the ballot back for no cost or drop it off at designated locations
 - o Some VBM jurisdictions have an “election day voting center”
 - o Voter may submit their absentee ballot at center
 - o Voter may submit an incomplete absentee ballot at an election day voting center, declare it spoiled, & vote in person
 - o Voter must sign the ballot for it to count
- o County/city need not conduct early voting
- o County/city need not have an election day voting center

Voting Eligible Population turnout, 2012

- o Minnesota: 76.1%
 - o Small cities all vote by mail
- o Wisconsin: 73.2%
- o Colorado: 71.1%
 - o All elections are vote by mail
- o Washington: 65% (12th)
 - o All elections are vote by mail
- o Oregon: 64.3% (13th)
 - o All elections are vote by mail



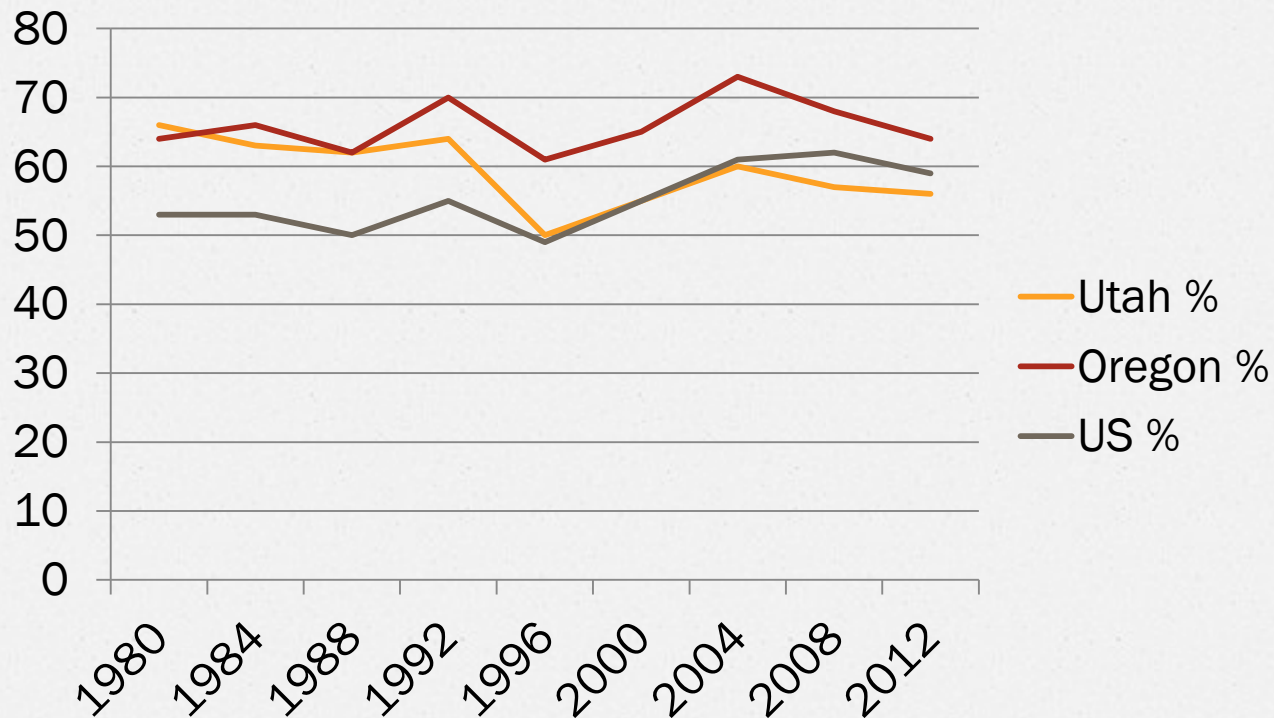
United States: 58%

Utah: 56% (39th)

(highest turnout in 20+ years)

1980s: Utah in top 10

By 2010, Utah in bottom 5



Who Voted by Mail in 2013?

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| o West Jordan | Paragonah |
| o Cottonwood Heights | Manila |
| o Riverdale | Tropic |
| o Vernal | Wales |
| o Roosevelt | Kanarraville |
| o Moroni | Vernon |
| o Duchesne | Rockville |
| o Brian Head | Snowville |
| o New Harmony | Hideout |
| o Bryce Canyon | |

**WHO INCREASED TURNOUT?
EVERY CITY & TOWN**

Vote by Mail concepts

Supporters say:

- ◊ Turnout increase
- ◊ Reduced costs (polling place locations/workers)
- ◊ More time for voters to prepare their ballots
- ◊ No poll workers

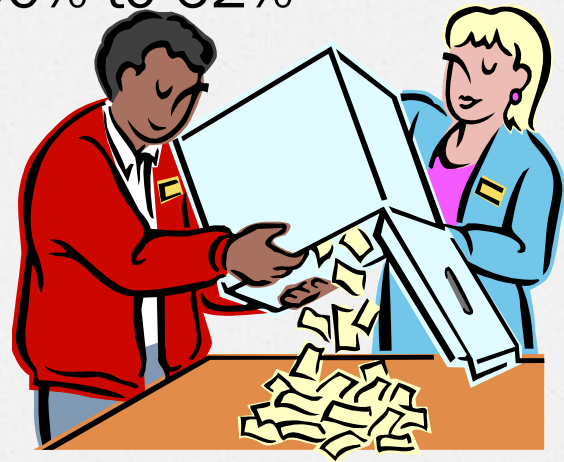
Critics say:

- ◊ Turnout impact
- ◊ Cost savings nullified by increased postage
- ◊ More susceptible to voter fraud
- ◊ More voting errors

Benefits to Vote by Mail – increased voter turnout

- o No bad weather concerns
 - o Every inch of rain above average on Election Day decreases turnout by 1%
- o **West Jordan** increased turnout from 14% to 35%
 - o Population 108,000; **150%** increase in voter turnout
- o **Moroni** increased turnout from 30% to 62%
 - o Population 1,429
 - o **106%** increase in voter turnout

All 19 Utah cities had an
Increase in turnout in 2013!



Benefits to Vote by Mail – decreased election costs

- o Riverdale City (pop. 8,560) :
 - o 2009: Paid \$19,410 for 24.02% turnout
 - o 2013: Paid \$12,504... for 47.85% VBM turnout
 - o **Doubled** turnout percentage while **saving** \$2,500!!!
- o West Jordan City:
 - o 2013: Saved \$24,000 (150% increase in turnout)

15 of 19 Utah cities saved money in 2013

4 of 19 Utah cities saw a slight increase in 2013

Potential concerns about Vote by Mail



- Voter fraud

Little evidence of VBM fraud in Oregon (VBM since 1981)

- Lost or tampered ballots

Can track ballot online

Submit ballots at election office or official drop site

- No poll workers to check signatures

Signature requirement on VBM ballot

Every signature verified

Potential concerns about Vote by Mail



- Mistakes on ballots
 - Undervotes or overvotes

Studies show VBM voters made fewer errors than in person voters

VBM voters can request new ballot

- Timing with voter registration timeline

TBD

- Voter coercion at home

Possible, but voter has more privacy & time to decide

Election Fraud in Utah & USA

(News 21)

o Utah

- o From 2000-2011, 51 cases of alleged election fraud in Utah
- o 0 cases of alleged VBM election fraud
- o 1.5 million reg voters
- o .000034%

o United States

- o From 2000-2011, 2,068 cases of alleged election fraud
- o 491 cases of alleged VBM election fraud
- o 146 million reg voters
- o .000014%

Consequences of Vote by Mail fraud



- o Falsifying a vote in a federal election = up to 5 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine
- o Willfully falsifying an absentee voter affidavit = Perjury (§20A-3-310)
- o Applying for a ballot in another's name = 3rd degree felony (§20A-3-505)
- o Little evidence of election fraud in Utah or USA
 - o From 2000-2011, 51 cases of alleged election fraud in Utah
 - o 1.5 million voters
 - o .000034%

Additional resources to learn about implementing Vote by Mail

- o <http://clerk.slco.org/elections/voteByMail.html>
- o <http://www.daviscountyutah.gov/clerkauditor/elections/absentee.cfm>
- o <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/absentee-and-early-voting.aspx>

