

Over 10,000 Mail-In Ballots Rejected in Michigan Primary Election

ZACHARY STIEBER

More than 10,000 ballots mailed in to election officials in Michigan will not be counted, primarily because they arrived late.

Of the approximately 10,600 rejected absentee ballots, 6,405 weren't counted because they arrived late, Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat, announced on Aug. 14.

Another 1,438 ballots lacked a signature, while 787 had signatures that didn't match.

More than 1,100 people had moved, invalidating their attempts to vote. And 846 ballots were from people who died after voting.

The dozens of remaining ballots had additional issues, including unconfirmed identification.

Benson said many of the issues could be fixed by bills already introduced in the state legislature, including House Bill 5987, which would allow mailed ballots to count if they're postmarked by Election Day, even if they arrive up to two days later.

"The data demonstrates that thousands of people who cast otherwise valid votes were not able to participate in last week's election solely because the Legislature failed to act ahead of the primary," Benson said in a statement. "With turnout and absentee ballot numbers expected to double or even triple in November, we could be looking at tens of thousands of Michigan citizens disenfranchised if the legislature again fails to act."

More late ballots may arrive in the following weeks, she added.

Benson in May announced her office would send all state residents absentee ballot applications, drawing criticism from President Donald Trump.

More than 2 million Michigan residents requested absentee ballots for the primary; 1.6 million returned them.

Results from the primary weren't finalized until the day



A man drops off his absentee ballot outside Detroit's Department of Elections during the Michigan primary election in Detroit on Aug. 4, 2020.

after the election.

Benson's office will send out postcards to 4.4 million voters informing them "of their right to vote from home" in November, she said on Aug. 13.

The number of people using vote-by-mail could double or even triple for the presidential election, state officials said.

Michigan's Bureau of Elections is allocating \$5.5 million to ramp up mail-in voting, including \$2 million that will reimburse local governments that pay postage on ballot return envelopes.

"This comprehensive investment—including our mailing of information to voters on how to request to vote by mail, funding return postage for ballots, purchasing more supplies for clerks to process mailed-in ballots, and installing more drop boxes throughout the state—will ensure that all voters know how to safely, easily, and freely exercise their right to vote from home," Benson said in a statement.

The unprecedented push of mail-in voting in states around the nation has caused concern. The U.S. Postal Service told 46 states on Aug. 14 that they're at risk of having their residents' mail-in ballots not be counted in

the November election because of tight vote-by-mail deadlines.

State Sen. Ruth Johnson, a Republican who was Michigan secretary of state from 2011 to 2019, has raised worries about the state's process.

"My concern is, we've received over 500 envelopes of people who have moved—and some up to 40 years ago—people that are dead they're being sent to, some houses get as many as nine different absentee ballot requests," Johnson said in a video message this month.

"When you're sending out absentee ballot requests from the state of Michigan, from the secretary of state, in essence saying you're on our qualified voter file, and we'd like you to vote, it sends a message to people that aren't qualified, that they may be able to vote. And I'm concerned that that will happen."

CORRECTION

The article "Trump Administration Offers Zero Payment Option for Unemployment Plan," published on Aug. 13, gave an incorrect date for President Donald Trump's comments to reporters about some states not having to pay for a stimulus. The president spoke to the reporters on Aug. 9. The Epoch Times regrets the error.