



## General Election FAQs

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### **Q: Is our election system secure from cyberattack?**

Washington employs the recommendations raised by security experts, and have done so for years. Such as Paper based systems, including voter verifiable paper audit trails, Independent testing, Pre- and post-election audits, and Physical security of tabulation equipment. The Voter registration Database (VRDB) and Washington Elections Information (WEI) systems are secured by highly skilled Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) IT staff, using state of the art equipment and following IT industry best practices. We have embarked on an unprecedented opportunity to work collaboratively with the Department of Homeland Security to ensure that our election systems remain secure. This partnership allows us to work together, elections and IT experts working hand in hand to ensure our systems are secure.

<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/System-Security.aspx>

### **Q: Can the election be rigged?**

Washington employs the recommendations raised by security experts, and have done so for years. Such as Paper based systems, including voter verifiable paper audit trails, Independent testing, Pre- and post-election audits, and Physical security of tabulation equipment. Before a tabulation system can be used in Washington, we require testing at a federally approved independent testing lab. These expert testers include security reviews as a part of their overall testing efforts. Then, systems are tested here at the state level and reviewed by our own voting systems certification board, comprised of technology experts, accessibility experts, and county election officials. Counties must then perform acceptance testing and logic and accuracy testing prior to every election. In addition, we conduct post-election audits, where we draw precincts and races

at random and compare the vote totals from the tabulator to a hand count of ballots before the election is certified.

**Q: What is being proposed to deal with the possibility of non-citizens registering and voting?**

Secretary Wyman and county partners proposed legislation for the upcoming session that would adopt the REAL ID Act for Washington. This could allow election administrators additional tools that could verify citizenship at the front end of the process.

**Q: What is the law on felons voting?**

If you were convicted of a felony in Washington State, your right to vote is restored as long as you are not under the authority (in prison or on community custody) of the Department of Corrections (DOC). Once your right is restored, you must re-register to vote in order to receive a ballot. If you were convicted of a felony in another state or in federal court, your right to vote is restored as long as you are not currently incarcerated for that felony.

If you have questions about your status with DOC, you can call (800) 430-9674.

<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voters/Felons-and-Voting-Rights.aspx>

**Q: How do I find a drop box?**

Login to [MyVote](#) and Select Drop Boxes and Voting Center Locations. You can then view a list or a map of drop boxes and voting centers in your area.

**Q: What services are available to voters living with disabilities?**

As a voter with a disability, you can request a reasonable accommodation or assistance to vote. The Office of the Secretary of State is committed to ensuring accessibility at voting centers, and that you have the opportunity to vote privately and independently.

Accessible formats of the voters' pamphlet are available online. If you wish to join the subscription list to receive a copy on CD or USB drive of the Voters' Pamphlet, please contact the voter hotline at (800) 448-4881 or email [voterspamphlet@sos.wa.gov](mailto:voterspamphlet@sos.wa.gov).

Accessible voting units (AVUs) are available starting 18 days before Election Day, until 8 p.m. on Election Day.

<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voters/Voters-with-Disabilities.aspx>

**Q: Is a voters' guide available online? How about PDF of the print version?**

Yes, the Voters' Pamphlet is available online in PDF, Text, and Audio. You can also view the Voters' Pamphlet in Spanish, Chinese, or Vietnamese.

<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/research/2016-General-Election-Voters-Pamphlet.aspx>

**Q: How can I find results on election night?**

Results can be found at [vote.wa.gov](http://vote.wa.gov) on Election Night. Results will be posted after drop boxes and voting centers close at 8PM. Expect the first results to publish online at around 8:15PM.

Or download our mobile results app in the app store or google play:  
WA State Election Results

**Q: What kind of turnout do we expect for this election? How long will it take to get results for the majority of the ballots?**

Turnout is anticipated to be about 84% for registered voters. Results will be certified by counties on November 29<sup>th</sup> and the State on December 7<sup>th</sup>. However, ballot processing should be nearly complete by November 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Q: What election improvements and reforms have our state made since the 2004 governor's election that highlighted some areas for improvement?**

Well over 500 election law and rule changes have been made since 2004. These changes include:

- Electronic voting devices are required to have a voter verified paper audit trails.
- Voters must provide identification when registering to vote.
- Ballot tallying equipment is certified by an independent testing lab approved by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission before it can be used in Washington State.
- County auditors must contact voters if their ballot signature does not match the voter's registration signature.
- The Secretary of State identifies and removes voters who are currently under the supervision of the Department of Corrections for a felony committed in Washington.
- County Auditors must account for every ballot received. This reconciliation must be presented to the county canvassing board when the election is certified and made available to the

public. If there is a discrepancy, the county auditor must provide an explanation.

- State Patrol signature verification training is required by election staff comparing ballot signatures.
- In person disability access voting must be available 18 days before an election. The county auditor must either compare the voter's signature or check identification before voters may use these units.
- A random check of ballot tabulation equipment is performed upon mutual agreement of the political party observers or at the discretion of the county auditor. A manual count is compared to the tabulated results to verify the accuracy of the equipment.
- County election procedures are reviewed by the Secretary of State. The auditor or county canvassing board must take corrective action for any problems uncovered during the review. The Secretary of State must verify the corrective action was taken.
- Several increases in penalties for election related crimes.

**Q: How can you tell if somebody tries to vote more than one ballot?**

Each voter has a single active record in the statewide voter registration database. When a ballot is received by the Election Division, the signature is compared to the voter's registration and the voter's record is marked as having returned a ballot. If the voter attempts to return an additional ballot, the system warns the election official that a ballot has already been returned. Election workers report that information to the canvassing board, who in turn reports it to the Prosecuting Attorney if further investigation is warranted.

**Q: Is it too late to register for this election?**

The deadline for citizens not already registered is October 31. Those who are not registered in our state may register in person at their county's election office through the close of business on Monday, Oct 31. If you are already a registered voter in our state, it is too late to make changes to your address or name. You should contact the county that you are registered in to obtain a ballot.

**Q: Is it possible to get a replacement ballot?**

Yes. Contact your county elections office to determine the best way to receive a replacement ballot. Replacement ballots may be sent via mail or electronically, picked up at the elections office, or printed from an online application.

**Q: Is it OK to selfie myself holding my voted ballot and post it on social media?**

The state of Washington does not directly prohibit ballot selfies. However, it is illegal to view another's ballot for a purpose prohibited by law, such as vote buying.

**Q: What are these tax advisory votes I see on my ballot?**

Advisory Votes give voters the opportunity to advise the Legislature whether to repeal or maintain a tax increase. Advisory votes are non-binding votes that will not change the law. Advisory votes are the result of Initiative 960, approved by voters in 2007. The Office of the Attorney General creates the ballot title according to the requirements of the initiative.

**Q: Does my write-in vote count?**

Every voter has the right to write-in a candidate instead of voting for one printed on the ballot. These votes are tabulated and reported cumulatively in one bucket as a write-in votes. This represents the total number of all write-in votes cast. These are considered valid votes.

However, write-in votes for individual candidates are only hand tallied if the total number of write-in votes may be enough to make a difference in the outcome of the race. (RCW 29A.60.021)