

Submitter: Samantha Wolf
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB210
To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen regarding the ongoing debate over voting methods, specifically the practice of in-person voting in the United States. While I deeply respect the tradition of civic participation, I believe it is time to reject the necessity of in-person ONLY voting, especially in light of the technological advancements and evolving needs of our society.

In-person voting has long been seen as a cornerstone of our democratic process. However, there are a number of compelling reasons why we should move away from this method as the only method of casting a ballot. Instead, we should continue and expand the use of modern alternatives like mail-in ballots voting systems. These alternatives are more in line with the realities of our modern age and can help strengthen, rather than undermine, our democracy.

1. Accessibility Issues: In-person voting disproportionately affects certain populations, particularly seniors, people with disabilities, and those living in rural or underserved areas. Long wait times, limited polling places, and the physical requirement to travel to a voting center create significant barriers for many eligible voters. These individuals should not be disenfranchised because of their inability to access a physical polling place. By expanding mail-in and online voting options, we can ensure that every citizen, regardless of their physical ability or geographic location, can participate in the democratic process.

2. Safety Concerns: The COVID-19 pandemic has starkly demonstrated the risks of gathering in crowded public spaces. As we face new and unpredictable health threats, it is crucial that we prioritize the safety of voters and election workers. Encouraging exclusive in-person voting poses unnecessary health risks to individuals, especially during times of public health crises. Voting by mail allows individuals to exercise their rights without compromising their safety or the safety of others.

3. Increased Voter Turnout: Studies have shown that increasing access to absentee ballots and online voting systems can lead to higher voter turnout. In-person voting, with its time constraints and logistical challenges, often discourages participation, especially among younger voters, shift workers, and people with busy schedules. Providing more flexible voting options allows people to vote when it is most convenient for them, resulting in a more representative democracy.

4. Financial and Economic Impact:

Exclusive in-person voting comes with a high financial cost for both federal, state, and local governments as well as taxpayers. The cost of maintaining polling stations, hiring staff, printing ballots, providing transportation services, and managing voter identification protocols adds up quickly. According to some estimates, the expense of conducting in-person elections can total billions of dollars every election cycle. Additionally, the need for extensive infrastructure—such as secure voting machines and physical spaces that comply with accessibility standards—further increases these costs.

Moreover, exclusive in-person voting creates an economic burden on voters themselves. For many, taking time off work to vote means lost wages. For others, the costs of traveling to polling stations—especially in rural areas where the nearest polling place may be hours away—are prohibitive. By expanding mail-in and online voting options, we can reduce the costs of election administration and ease the financial strain on voters, leading to a more equitable and efficient election process.

In conclusion, while I recognize the historical significance of in-person voting, it is time for our nation to evolve and embrace more modern, accessible, and efficient methods of voting. I urge you to support mail-in voting in order to provide seamless, equitable experience for all Americans.

Sincerely, Samantha Wolf