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On Behalf Of:

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Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB210

Mail-in voting is a vital component of American democracy, enhancing accessibility, security, and participation across the electorate. Below are key reasons substantiating its importance, supported by authoritative sources:

Accessibility for Diverse Voter Groups

Mail-in voting ensures that individuals who may face challenges with in-person voting—such as military personnel stationed overseas, seniors, and people with disabilities—can participate in elections. Historically, during the Civil War, approximately 150,000 Union soldiers voted absentee in the 1864 presidential election.

For voters with disabilities, federal laws like the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) mandate equal access to the electoral process, ensuring accommodations are available.

Enhanced Security Measures

Mail-in voting incorporates multiple security features to maintain election integrity. Signature verification is a common method, with election officials comparing the signature on a mail ballot envelope to those on file to confirm voter identity.

Additionally, many states provide ballot tracking systems, allowing voters to monitor the status of their mail ballots, thereby increasing transparency and trust in the process. ?

Historical Precedent and Reliability

Mail-in voting has a longstanding history in the United States. Beyond military use, states like Oregon have successfully implemented all-mail voting systems for decades, demonstrating the method's reliability and effectiveness.

By facilitating broader participation and upholding rigorous security protocols, mail-in voting reinforces the democratic principle that every eligible citizen should have the opportunity to vote without unnecessary barriers.

Concerns about mail-in voting often center around potential fraud, ballot mishandling, and voter coercion. However, extensive research and evidence indicate that such

concerns are largely unfounded. Here's an examination of these issues:

Minimal Incidence of Mail-In Voting Fraud

Multiple studies have demonstrated that voter fraud associated with mail-in ballots is exceedingly rare. The UCLA Voting Rights Project found that instances of such fraud are virtually nonexistent, emphasizing that concerns are disproportionate to the actual occurrence. Additionally, the Center for Democracy and Technology explains that the absentee voting process includes numerous security checks, such as voter registration verification, unique ballot identifiers, and signature matching, making widespread fraud highly unlikely.

Robust Security Measures

Election officials implement stringent procedures to ensure the integrity of mail-in voting. These measures include signature verification, barcodes, and ballot-tracking systems that prevent tampering and ensure accurate counting. The Associated Press reports that all states verify mail and absentee ballots, regardless of how they are cast, and that fraud related to mail-in voting is exceedingly rare.

Addressing Isolated Incidents

While isolated cases of misconduct have occurred, they are not indicative of systemic issues. For example, in Bridgeport, Connecticut, five individuals were charged with absentee ballot fraud during the 2023 Democratic primary. However, such incidents are rare and often detected due to the robust security measures in place.

Conclusion

The evidence overwhelmingly supports the security and reliability of mail-in voting. While no system is entirely immune to isolated incidents, the comprehensive safeguards and the rarity of fraud underscore that mail-in voting remains a trustworthy method for conducting elections in the United States.

<https://apnews.com/article/fact-check-mail-ballots-548867406076>

<https://vrp.ucla.edu/research/ucla-voting-rights-project-debunking-the-myth-of-voter-fraud-in-mail-ballots/>

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/low-rates-of-fraud-in-vote-by-mail-states-show-the-benefits-outweigh-the-risks/>