

We must have a way for our citizens to vote without endangering their lives. Seniors make up twenty percent of our population and they have a high risk of coronavirus. Add to them the people with underlying conditions. Add the poor, who are also at high risk because they live in areas with high pollution that causes a high incidence of respiratory problems such as asthma. And then add those who reside with all of these people. All of them need a safe way to vote.

The claim that absentee voting results in fraud is not borne out by the data.

Nearly a quarter of voters in the 2016 presidential election voted by mail. President Trump thought there was fraud in that election but the commission he created to find the fraud found nothing.

The Heritage Foundation, a politically conservative organization, warns that using absentee/mail-in ballots leads to fraud. If we look at the data on their own website, however, we find nothing to back up this claim. Instead, it shows that the states that use only mail-in ballots have almost no mail fraud. For example, for Colorado, which has voted entirely by absentee ballot since 2013, Heritage shows **only seven instances of voter fraud for the 6 years between then and 2018, of which only three were absentee ballot cases.** (The others were two cases of ballot petition fraud, one of duplicate voting, and one of false registration).

In Connecticut there were 30 instances of ballot fraud over 20 years. Eighteen of these were absentee ballot-related; twelve were not.

Some legislators point to 2018, when people working for one campaign took ballots from patients in nursing homes and filled them in to benefit their own candidate. I don't see this as an example that the system failed, however - I see that it works. First of all, nursing home patients are sent absentee ballots routinely and 2018 was the first time there was a problem. Secondly, the scam was uncovered quickly.

So let's put aside the erroneous idea that mail-in ballots create fraud and find a realistic solution to our current conundrum. We could:

1. Use mail-in ballots and establish the processes that other states use to prevent fraud.
2. Schedule voting appointments for people at risk, and/or allow early voting so that they will have minimal contact with others.
3. Set up an auditing procedure to check the reasonableness of the mailed ballots' results. Since the Secretary of the State already audits elections, there must be procedures in place to do that effectively.

I'm sure you're better at coming up with solutions than I am. I just want to be able to both vote and stay alive.