



How to Vote in Connecticut's 2020 Election: *What You Need to Know*

Connecticut officials are taking steps to expand absentee voting, though there are unresolved issues that make it unclear if all voters will be able to safely vote from home:

- State lawmakers passed legislation in July that will allow voters to cite fear of contracting COVID-19 as a reason for requesting an absentee ballot. Gov. Ned Lamont (D) had previously issued an executive order doing so for the August primary. Typically, Connecticut voters can only request an absentee ballot because of an illness or other limited exceptions.
- State officials are working with cities and towns on protocols for keeping polling places safe. That includes paying for cleaning supplies and equipment and hiring additional election workers, if needed.

Here's what else you need to know:

How do I register to vote?

You can register at the Office of the Secretary of the State's website. You can also download a registration form and either mail it or drop it off in person at your local town clerk's office. To vote on Election Day, your form must be postmarked or received by Oct. 27.

Connecticut also offers Election Day registration, though it's not available at polling places. Contact your local registrar of voters office for information on designated locations.

How can I get an absentee ballot? Are there important deadlines?

Traditionally, Connecticut voters could request an absentee ballot only if they were traveling on Election Day, have a disability, or meet other strict criteria. But state lawmakers passed a bill in July that makes COVID-19 a valid reason for requesting an absentee ballot. All registered voters can complete the application and mail it to their town clerk. They will then receive an absentee ballot by mail.

Ballots can be returned by mail or in person to either the town clerk's office to which you are assigned, or dropped in new tamper-proof drop boxes set up outside each town hall in every town. Your town clerk must receive your absentee ballot by 8 p.m.

on Election Day, Nov. 3.

Secretary of State Denise Merrill (D) is urging voters to place their absentee ballots in drop boxes managed by local election officials.

How do I know my absentee ballot is secure?

Absentee voting in Connecticut is a two-step process. Voters must first fill out an application and sign a declaration attesting to the truth of the information. Anyone providing assistance with the application must also sign it. After completing the ballot, absentee voters must sign the envelope, affirming they are who they say they are. Providing a false statement is a felony punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

The state also received federal funding to take steps to strengthen its cybersecurity defenses against election interference. Among the measures, the Connecticut National Guard will perform a high-level assessment of each town's election infrastructure. The secretary of the state has posted more details about ballot security online.

When is Election Day? When are polls open?

Tuesday, Nov. 3. Polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Can I vote in person before Election Day?

Connecticut does not allow early in-person voting. Those who do not use absentee ballots will need to vote on Election Day at a polling place.

What form of identification do I need to vote?

While not required, it's a good idea to bring a driver's license, Social Security card or government-issued ID. Voters without proper ID must sign an affidavit of identity affirming they are who they say they are. More information about acceptable identification is at the secretary of the state's website.

What is being done to make polling places safe from coronavirus?

As part of Connecticut's Safe Polls Plan, the state is covering all COVID-related election expenses for towns, including the cost of cleaning and safety products and the hiring of additional personnel if needed. In April, Connecticut began requiring masks for anyone over the age of 2 in a public space where social distancing isn't possible, except for those with certain medical conditions. You can learn more about polling place safety measures at the state's election website.

Will I be able to vote in the same place as I always have?

Yes. Connecticut has no plans to close polling places because of COVID-19. Still, you should verify your polling place online before heading to vote.

What are the key races in my state?

- U.S. President
- U.S. House: All 5 seats
- State House: All 151 seats
- State Senate: All 36 seats

Voting rules and procedures may change before Election Day. We'll update this story if they do, so bookmark this page and check back.

AARP is urging older Americans to ask the candidates 5 key questions:

- Just over half of all older Social Security beneficiaries rely on the program for at least 50 percent of their income. If elected, how will you ensure that current and future Social Security benefits are not cut as part of deficit reduction?
- Half of the people with traditional Medicare spend at least a sixth of their income on health care. If elected, how will you protect Medicare from benefit cuts, as well as lower health care costs and ensure seniors continue receiving the affordable health care they have earned?
- Unemployment during the coronavirus crisis reached the highest levels since the Great Depression, and older Americans have been affected disproportionately. If elected, how will you help Americans over the age of 50 recover economically from the effects of the coronavirus?
- Americans pay the highest prescription drug prices in the world. If elected, how will you cut prescription drug prices for all Americans?
- COVID-19 has caused death and suffering for too many older Americans who require long-term care. If elected, how will you make sure seniors can access safe and affordable long-term care at home, as well as in facilities like nursing homes and assisted living?

Also of Interest

- Stay updated on the 2020 election at [AARP.org/election2020](https://www.aarp.org/election2020).
- For the latest coronavirus news and advice go to [AARP.org/coronavirus](https://www.aarp.org/coronavirus).