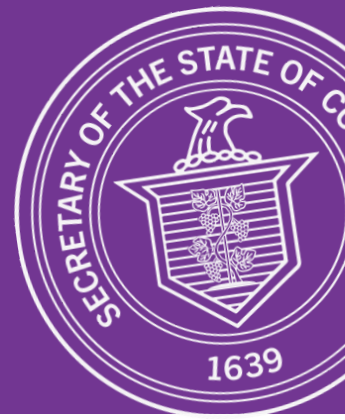


Every week from October 8-29, the **Office of the Secretary of the State** will distribute a Connecticut 2026 General Election Fact Sheet to the media.



Connecticut 2026 General Election Media Fact Sheet

Thursday, October 8, 2026



Did you know that turnout fell by more than **11% between Connecticut's last two midterm elections?** Even though there were about 71,000 **more registered voters** in 2022 than in 2018, roughly 124,000 **fewer people actually voted.**

Election-Related News to Report October 8-14

With absentee ballots on the way to voters across the state – and Connecticut preparing for its **first General Election with universal absentee voting** – **here are two stories worth covering right now:**

Story idea #1. If you're casting your vote by absentee ballot, make sure your vote counts.

No one wants to make a mistake with their absentee ballot. But if you do, there's a process called "curing" that can help catch certain problems and fix them before it's too late. This year, **more Connecticut voters than ever are eligible to vote absentee**, and some will be doing so for the first time. Your reporting can ensure that first-time absentee voters know the process, plus assure them that if they accidentally make an error like forgetting to sign their absentee ballot envelope, curing gives them an opportunity to fix it before Election Day and in time for their vote to count.

- What is curing? If a voter forgets to sign the absentee-ballot return envelope, Connecticut law allows the voter to correct that mistake in person at their Town Clerk's office. Town Clerks must make their best effort to contact the voter by phone or email, and the voter has until polls close at 8 p.m. on Election Day to cure the missing signature. Only a missing voter signature on the return envelope is eligible for curing.

Why is this story timely? On October 2, Town Clerks started mailing out absentee ballots to eligible voters who submitted applications, so **the absentee ballot and election processes are already under way.**

What reporters can help voters know: Complete the ballot carefully, and print and sign your name on the return envelope. Providing a phone number and/or email address on your absentee ballot application can help your Town Clerk reach you if your signature is missing. And don't wait



Election-Related News to Report October 8-14, continued

until the last minute! A voter returning their own ballot in person to the Town Clerk must do so by the close of business on November 2. Ballots returned by mail or secure drop box must be received by the Town Clerk by 8 p.m. on Election Day. Ballots returned in person by an authorized designee for an ill or disabled voter or by an immediate family member may also be returned until 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Story idea #2. CT voters asked for expanded absentee voting. Now it's happening statewide.

Connecticut is about to hold its first statewide general election with universal absentee voting. In 2024, Connecticut voters approved a constitutional amendment allowing every registered voter to vote by absentee ballot.

Here's something you may not know: The new law (**P.A. 26-42**) has already been put to the test. Just five weeks after Governor Lamont signed the legislation implementing universal absentee voting in May, Middlebury became the first Connecticut community to conduct an election under the new law during its June 23 special election. In August, the Office of the Secretary of the State (SOTS) took what was implemented in one town and rolled it out statewide for the Primary Elections. And now, universal absentee voting will allow every registered Connecticut voter to have the option to vote absentee without an excuse in the November General Election.

What happened behind the scenes: Passing the law was only the beginning. SOTS had to translate a major statutory change into procedures that could work in every Connecticut community. That work included updating forms and election materials; adapting systems and procedures; developing detailed guidance on the new absentee-ballot process and curing; preparing materials and manuals for Town Clerks and absentee ballot counters; training and supporting local election officials; updating **voter-facing information** and **online resources**; and educating Connecticut voters about both the new opportunity and the rules that protect absentee ballots.

What voters should know: Universal absentee voting doesn't mean everyone automatically receives a ballot. An eligible registered voter must still request an absentee ballot. Applications can be **submitted online** or **on paper** through the voter's Town Clerk. Return deadlines vary depending on how the ballot is returned, so voters should check the applicable deadline before returning it.



Said Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas: "Expanding access only works if voters understand how to use that access. Voter education is voter protection, and we want every voter who chooses to vote absentee to know what to sign, how to return their ballot, and where to go if they have a question."

Is there a list of all the candidates running for office?

Registrars of Voters and Town Clerks are the best sources for each town. SOTS also publishes a **Voter Guide**, which includes a candidate list. As a service to voters, **our Office posts sample ballots, listed by town, on a rolling basis** as we receive the information from Town Clerks.



2026 General Election Absentee Ballot FAQs

Can I vote absentee this year?

Yes. Any active registered Connecticut voter can **vote by absentee ballot**. You no longer need a specific reason or excuse.

How do I get an absentee ballot?

Start by applying. You can **apply online** through the absentee ballot portal or complete a paper application and send or bring it to your Town Clerk.

What will I get with my absentee ballot?

You'll receive your ballot, a return envelope, and a privacy sleeve. You must use the return envelope, but the sleeve is optional. You can use it if you want extra privacy, but leaving it out won't prevent your ballot from being counted.

What is 'ballot curing'?

Curing is the process to correct a missing signature on an absentee ballot return envelope. If you forget to sign your envelope, your Town Clerk will make their best effort to contact you, so you have an opportunity to correct this before the polls close on Election Day. Provide a phone number and email on your absentee ballot application so they can reach you.

Because the signature is on the return envelope, Town Clerks can check for it while your ballot itself stays sealed.

Where do I return my ballot, and when does it have to get there?

In person by the voter to the Town Clerk: No later than the close of business on November 2, 2026 — the day before Election Day.

In person to the Town Clerk by an authorized designee or an immediate family member for an ill or disabled voter: No later than 8 p.m. on Election Day.

By mail or official ballot drop box: Must be received by the Town Clerk no later than 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Hearing conflicting things about voting by mail? Federal headlines have created understandable confusion. For Connecticut voters, the ways you can return your absentee ballot haven't changed, with mail still an option.



2026 General Election Absentee Ballot FAQs continued

Who can return my absentee ballot?

There are **very specific rules** about who can return an absentee ballot. If mailing your ballot or placing it in an official drop box, it can be returned by:

- You, the voter.
- An immediate family member who is a spouse, child, parent, or sibling and lives with you.
- Your legal designee, such as a doctor, nurse, or family member who is caring for you because of an illness or disability and whom you designated in Section VI of your absentee ballot application.
- A police officer.
- Your Registrar of Voters, Deputy Registrar of Voters, or Assistant Registrar of Voters.

If returning directly to your Town Clerk, it can be returned by:

- You, the voter.
- An immediate family member who is a spouse, child, parent, or sibling and lives with you.
- Your legal designee, such as a doctor, nurse, or family member who is caring for you because of an illness or disability and whom you designated in Section VI of your absentee ballot application.

How can I track my absentee ballot?

You can check the status of your absentee ballot by contacting your Town Clerk or using the **Voter Registration Lookup tool**. Enter your town, first and last name, and date of birth. Along with your registration status, the results will show whether your absentee ballot has been received by your Town Clerk.

Please Remind Voters to Check Their Registration!

It's important for voters to confirm their registration status ahead of Election Day to ensure their information is current and they know exactly where to vote. Connecticut residents can verify their registration, party affiliation, and regular polling location in under a minute using the online lookup tool at **MyVote.CT.gov/lookup**. Sharing this link can help reduce confusion and delays at the polls.



Websites, Resources, and Contact Information

November 3, 2026 General Election Calendar

Report on Voting Issues

- During Early Voting: (866) 733-2463 or email elections@CT.gov
- On Election Day: (866) 733-2463 or email elections@CT.gov
- Any time to the **Connecticut State Elections Enforcement Committee**: (866) 733-2463 or (866) SEEC-INFO or [**through the SEEC website**](#)

Absentee Ballot Information at MyVote.CT.gov/Absentee

Downloadable Early Voting One-Sheets in English & Spanish at Civics101.CT.gov

Office of the Secretary of the State Elections & Voter Information at MyVote.CT.gov

Online Voter Registration at VoterRegistration.CT.gov

Voter Registration Lookup Tool at MyVote.CT.gov/lookup

Election Night Results Reporting

Election Results Archive

Connecticut General Statutes Title 9 – Elections

Need a quote from Secretary Thomas or other information from the Office of the Secretary of the State?

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