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## **ABSENTEE VOTING EXPANDED IN 25 STATES Reduces Public Controls, Expands Opportunity for Election Fraud**

Risky electoral conditions are being introduced because someone says "Why don't we just mail ballots?" Election officials are pitching vote by mail as convenient and safe. Journalists don't always obtain an opposing point of view before publishing stories on this risky new trend. Half the USA has now shifted to no-fault absentee voting. Here is an opposing point of view, along with sources and citations for vote-by-mail incidents.

*No-fault absentee voting* is now enabled in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, and Wyoming; Forced all-vote-by-mail is in place in Washington and Oregon; no-fault vote-by-mail is proposed but not yet passed in Alabama, District of Columbia, Indiana, Missouri and Wisconsin. A federal bill (Universal Right to Vote by Mail Act: H.R. 1604) proposes to enforce no-fault absentee voting nationwide.

Areas with need-based absentee voting typically average about 12% absentee voting, including overseas, military, sick and shut-in, elderly, and out-of-towners. Areas with "no-fault absentee" gradually increase from about 25% (early stages) to over 50% (after no-fault absentee used for several years), increasing the size of the at-risk vote pool.

### **TOP TEN PROBLEMS WITH EXPANDING ABSENTEE VOTING:**

- 1. Absentee voting conceals who actually casts the votes.** A real person doesn't show up to vote, eliminating a crucial public control for elections.
- 2. Absentee voting has difficult challenges for ballot chain of custody.** Even locations that claim to use video surveillance sometimes turn off cameras, send them out for maintenance, or decide not to use them while elections are in progress.<sup>(1)(2)</sup>
- 3. Absentee voting has a history of inside tampering** by election officials.<sup>(3)</sup>
- 4. Absentee voting uses unregulated and concealed software to authorize votes.** The unregulated "VoteRemote" software purchased by Diebold/Premier was designed by convicted embezzler Jeffrey Dean, who spent four years in prison for computer fraud. Court records show that Dean began working on VoteRemote for King County, Washington while *still in prison*, on a work release program.<sup>(4)</sup>
- 5. Absentee voting eliminates ballot privacy when used in combination with ballot tracking or incorrectly designed ballot authentication software.** A ballot tracking program used in San Juan County (Wash.) removed voter privacy and altered ballot approvals during the canvassing period and even after the canvassing period had expired, and misreported who had voted and who had not.<sup>(5)</sup>
- 6. Absentee voting expansion has a partisan history:** Nearly all legislation to expand vote by mail and no-fault absentee is introduced by Democrats, and nearly all sponsors in both state and federal pro-absentee voting legislation are Democrats.
- 7. Signature comparison isn't what people think:** It uses electronic facsimiles, not physical signatures. These can be swapped and altered electronically, and in fact, signatures do not need

to match at all! In Lake County Indiana, a set of rejected absentee ballots were simply changed to "accepted" after the matching process.<sup>(6)</sup> All this requires is replacement of "no" with "yes" in a database, which can be done *after* signature checks. In Washington State the paw print of a dog named Duncan passed signature checking for two elections in a row.<sup>(7)</sup>

**8. Vote by mail is sold to the public using questionable data.** Contrary to what supporters claim, vote by mail does not necessarily increase turnout. According to data from the US Election Assistance Commission, all vote-by-mail Oregon was squarely in the middle of the pack for voter turnout.<sup>(8)</sup> Also, Oregon reports impossible numbers: Out of 2.5 million ballots mailed in the 2006 general election, Oregon reported *zero* ballots returned undeliverable, and Oregon says only 54 were received after the deadline.<sup>(9)</sup>

**9. Ballot printers have a history of mailing wrong ballots, omitted ballots, and late ballots.** During the crucial 2008 general election, Sequoia Voting Systems reported to Denver County (Colo.) that it had mailed 21,450 ballots, when it actually only mailed 10,364 ballots.<sup>(10)</sup> Only when voters complained did Sequoia admit that it never sent the ballots. In Sutter County (Calif) Sequoia mailed absentee ballots missing ballot questions, but only for some voters.<sup>(11)</sup>

**10. Absentee voting enables cheat-peeks:** Computer logs from Pima County, Arizona show that election workers were printing absentee results before election day; e-mails obtained with public records requests show they were passing early results around like baseball scores, giving unfair advantage to those candidates selected to receive them.

#### **SOURCES:**

(1) Scripps Newspaper Group - Aug. 14, 2008, By Elliott Jones: ***Indian River County elections office security cameras shut down*** - ...The cameras oversee the mail-in ballots, which are kept in a vault. [Public records show that video cameras were out of service for a month.]

(2) Sun Sentinel - Aug. 2008: ***Elections supervisor installs security cameras*** - ... The cost for installing the cameras, she said, is estimated at \$300,000; [Records requests from Black Box Voting following a ballot snafu in August 2008 elicited the response that they had never installed the system and didn't plan to until after the election.]

(3) North Jersey Conservative Examiner - Aug. 4, 2009, by Mark Impomeni: ***Campaign workers indicted in election fraud case;*** " ...At least one of the defendants was in a position to impact elections on a regular basis. Gianine Narvaez **worked in the office of the Essex County Superintendent of Elections.**"

(4) Jeffrey Dean prison papers <http://bbvdocs.org/dean.pdf> and court transcripts <http://www.bbvforums.org/cgi-bin/forums/board-auth.cgi?file=/2197/14323.html>

(5) Related to this case, a lawsuit was filed by Washington citizens Tim White and Alan Rosato in July 2009 seeking redress on some of these issues. Here is a video as they describe their discovery of theft of voter privacy and alteration of authentications:

<http://video.google.com/googleplayer.swf?docid=9179686114813589881>

(6) WJOB News - May 28, 2007: ***Lake County Ballots Accidentally Manipulated from Outside System*** - Lake County election officials say they were disturbed to learn a vendor had altered the status of dozens of absentee ballots after the election. ...The incident occurred May 15th, when an employee of Indianapolis-based Quest Information Systems **changed the status of 58 Lake County absentee ballots cast in the May Eighth primary from rejected to accepted.**

(7) KING 5 News - June 24, 2007, By Alan Schauffler: ***Federal Way woman registers dog to vote***

(8) Here's the data: [www.blackboxvoting.org/EAC2006stats.xls](http://www.blackboxvoting.org/EAC2006stats.xls)

(9) [www.eac.gov/clearinghouse/completed-research-and-eports/electionday-survey-results](http://www.eac.gov/clearinghouse/completed-research-and-eports/electionday-survey-results)

(10) Rocky Mountain News - Oct. 24, 2008, by Myung Oak Kim: ***'Missing' Denver mail ballots were never sent by vendor*** - The U.S. Postal Service said Friday afternoon that its Denver mail processing facility received 10,364 ballots on Oct. 16 and delivered them within a couple days. But the California printing company hired by Denver Elections said it delivered 21,450 ballots to the postal facility on that date...Denver Clerk and Recorder Stephanie O'Malley said the ballots in question were never prepared by the vendor.

(11) Sutter County Registrar of Voters - Oct. 16, 2008: ***Printer's Error On Vote-By-Mail Ballots In Sutter County*** - A printer's error has resulted in the printing and mailing of incomplete vote-by-mail ballots to approximately 14,000 Sutter County voters.