



October 21, 2020

Let's Vote!

The Washington Post reports that as of October 21, 2020, at least 35.9 million have already voted nationwide, with 13 days left until Election Day. The U.S. has already hit 76% of total 2016 early voting. Even with so many ballots already cast, it's not definitive that unprecedented early voting will translate into voter turnout to exceed the historically high number of votes cast in 2016: 139 million. It's possible that when the dust settles after November 3rd, the number of Americans who voted will be similar to numbers in previous presidential elections, though they used different methods. Nevertheless, voting this year is more important than ever.

What if I haven't registered to vote? Same-day registration services are available at every Early Voting site – the West Side locations are listed below. Two forms of ID, one of which shows the voter's current address, are needed to register for the first time or to file a name change or an address update.

What about Early Voting? Some people want to vote early to avoid long lines, potential confusion, or disruptions on Election Day. According to the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners, for the November 3 General Election, Chicago voters may use any Early Voting & Registration location in the city: at the Loop Super Site at 191 N. Clark St., and now, at the 50 Ward sites – the West Side locations listed below. Chicago voters may use any Early Voting location in the city. For the first time in history, Union Station is serving as a polling location, built for suburban commuters to vote. Any ballots that voters cast in Early Voting are final. Government-issued photo ID is not required but is helpful if there is a question about the voter's registration, address, signature or if there are two voters at the same address with the same names or similar names.

What about Vote by Mail? In March 2019, even before the coronavirus pandemic, I introduced legislation that authorized voters to have access to a vote by mail ballot for the 2020 elections, and a version of that legislation became law. According to the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners, due to COVID-19, voters are encouraged to use Vote By Mail or Early Voting before Election Day on November 3, 2020. Statewide, the number of applications for mail ballots is just shy of 2 million, at 1,998,624 requests. Many people have already received a Vote By Mail ballot. According to the Illinois State Board of Elections, at the current rate, the state is on track to have 25% to 30% of the vote cast by mail-in ballots.

What if I don't want to mail my Vote by Mail ballot? Well, you can drop off your Vote By Mail ballot at a secure lock box at any Chicago early voting site. Secured Drop Boxes will be available at every Early Voting site for any Chicago Vote By Mail voter to submit the signed and sealed Ballot Return Envelope. Every voter is encouraged to wear a facemask that covers the mouth and nose, whether visiting to use in-person Early Voting or to use a Secured Drop Box. Voters in line must practice social distancing with 6 feet of space between persons in line.

Where can I vote early or drop off my Vote by Mail ballot? West Side Early Voting locations where you can vote early or submit your Vote By Mail Ballot to a secure drop Box include: Herzl Elementary School, 3711 W. Douglas Blvd; Suder Elementary School, 2022 W. Washington Blvd; Westside Learning Center, 4624 W. Madison St.; Burbank Elementary School, 2035 N. Mobile Ave.; Hanson Park Elementary School, 5411 W. Fullerton Ave.; and McNair Elementary School, 4820 W. Walton St. Hours are Monday-Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 7 p.m. and Saturday-Sunday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Election day hours on November 3, 2020 are 6 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Let's all vote, either early, or on Election Day!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'La Shawn K. Ford', with a stylized flourish at the end.

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District