

Election 2020: Time to Make Your Mark!

Monday, October 5 was the first day for early voting in Iowa. In other words, it's go time. Time to voice your opinion with your vote. Time to set the course for our country's and our state's future. *It's time to make your mark!*

This issue is focused on voting basics. We want you to have the information you need to participate in this historic election. We want you to know the voting options you have and where to find information about the people on the ballot. **When Iowans with disabilities vote, our elected officials will take note.**

It's your turn to decide, and we want to make sure every voter with a disability has the chance to cast a vote. Contact the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council if you have any questions about voting (800-452-1936).

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Election Day 2020 is on Tuesday, November 3.



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VOTE 2020: Safe and Secure

There has been a lot of talk about voting in the news, but it is important to note that each state decides how to conduct its elections. Iowa has always been a leader in its elections and our county voting officials, called county auditors, are there to help you make your mark.

- Iowa allows anyone to vote by mail or early in-person at county auditor's offices. *Not every state does this!*
- Iowa's 99 county auditors all want to make sure every Iowan is able to vote. *They are there to help you!*
- Recent changes in Iowa law make sure your ballot is tracked from the moment it is mailed, *making sure it is counted.*
- If voting by mail (absentee), you can also track your ballot through the process at <https://bit.ly/3lqrywz>.

During last week's Make Your Mark 2020 Conference legislative panel, **Republican and Democratic elected officials all said Iowa's voting system is safe and secure, including mail-in voting.** They advised people who are nervous about COVID-19 or getting to the polls on Election Day to take advantage of Iowa's easy vote by mail or in-person early voting options. Iowa's Secretary of State Paul Pate has also said voting by mail is safe and secure, and is the safest way to vote for those that have health conditions that put them at a higher risk for COVID-19. He urges Iowans to #votesafe.

"The primary showed us how well we can actually do this...we had large turnout with every few hiccups. Everyone wants to work in the State of Iowa, and our county auditors have put in the extra time to make voting as accessible as possible. You should be very comfortable in voting early and with the absentee process." Sen. Amanda Ragan (D-Mason City)

"Senator Ernst, before she served in the Senate, was the county auditor for Montgomery County. As she's said many times, she believes our election system is safe and secure, and absentee is a perfectly valid way to vote if you want to do that." John Hollinrake, Regional Director for US Senator Joni Ernst

So don't pay attention to the social media trolls that are trying to make you doubt the system. They just want to lower voter turnout. Your vote is safe whether you choose to vote in-person on Election Day, in-person early, or by mail from your home. **If you want to make sure your vote counts, make a plan now.** If that plan includes voting by mail, you will need to make sure you request that ballot soon, fill it out, and send it back quickly. *Election Day is right around the corner!*

Still want more information? Check out this video on Iowa's election security - [https://vimeo.com/280607200!](https://vimeo.com/280607200)

VOTE 2020: Voting Options

Iowans have several voting options, so pick the one that best meets your needs. Iowa weather in November is unpredictable; snow, ice, rain, and sunny warm weather, we've seen them all on past Election Days. If you have health conditions that put you at risk for COVID-19, you may also want to consider these options carefully. Who knows what a year like 2020 has in store for us on **Tuesday, November 3, 2020 (Election Day)**. **It is important that you make your plan to vote now, while you still have all of the options available to you.**

****Before we start, make sure you are registered to vote, and your name and address are current.****

You can do that online here, or by contacting your county auditor.

You can also register to vote online here if you have an Iowa Driver's License or Non-Operator ID Card.

You only need to register to vote once; you do not need to renew it unless you have moved or changed your name.

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VOTE 2020: Voting Options *(continued from page 2)*

1. **Voting Early (by Mail).** Iowans can ask to vote by mail by sending a request to their county auditor (link above). County auditors have started mailing out ballots, so if you have already requested to vote by mail, look for them in your mailbox soon. They will continue mailing the ballots out daily as new requests come in. To request this ballot, call your auditor or if you have access to a printer, you can print off the form at <https://bit.ly/2ldVcqN>.
2. **Voting Early (at County Auditor's Office).** You can go to your county auditor's office to vote now through Monday, November 2. County auditor offices are open only during business hours (typically 8 am to 4:30 pm). County auditors are also required to be open the two Saturdays before the election for early voting (October 24 and October 31, typically open 8-4 or 9-5 pm, check your auditor's website to be sure). For voters who need assistance in marking their ballots, an accessible ballot marking device is available at the county auditor's office. You will need to fill out the ballot there - you cannot take it home with you. Remember, you will need to bring your photo ID or have your voter verification number (also called a voter ID number). County auditors are also offering curbside voting; in most counties you will want to call ahead to make sure they have someone available and ready for you. *Remember, if you requested a mail-in ballot, you will not be able to vote early at the courthouse unless you bring the ballot in with you.*
3. **Voting Early (at Satellite Sites).** Some county auditors have approved early voting centers in other areas of the community, called satellite voting sites. These are typically located in libraries, community centers, and other locations convenient to voters. There may not be as many of these this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Check out your county auditor's website for more information about all your early voting options, including satellite sites and curbside voting at your auditor's office. If you don't find the information you need, then call your county auditor to find out more.
4. **Election Day (November 3) Voting.** Polls are open 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. in Iowa. You will need to bring your photo ID or have your Voter Verification Number (your voter ID). All precincts will have an accessible voting machine available if you wish to vote that way. You may also bring someone with you to help you mark your ballot, or may ask for someone at the voting location for help. The person cannot be your employer or a union representative. Remember, the person assisting you can only help you mark the ballot. They cannot tell you *who* to vote for.
5. **Curbside Election Day (November 3) Voting.** Iowans with disabilities can also choose curbside voting. You just need to go to your precinct to vote. You will either need to send someone inside to let them know you want to vote curbside, or call your county auditor before you leave so they can be ready for you. Otherwise, you can ask another voter to let them know you are waiting. They will send out two election officials (one from each party) with everything you need to vote from inside your car. You will be asked to sign a form stating that you requested election assistance. You may still allow another person to help you make your marks on the ballot, but they must vote the way you instruct them (or it is voter fraud - a felony).

Whichever way you choose to vote - at home with a mail-in ballot, early at a county auditor's office, or on Election Day at your precinct polls - make sure you vote! It's important, and many races in recent years have been decided by a handful of votes. That could mean the difference between who controls the US Congress or Iowa Legislature. It's a big deal.

"This is one area where no matter what the issue, no matter what your ability level, voting is the great equalizer. We all have exactly one vote, and this is the time to make it count!"

Rep. Ann Meyer (R-Fort Dodge)

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VOTE 2020: Voting Options

WORTHY OF REPEATING: One person, one vote. That's very important for our election system. If you requested to vote by mail, that is your official ballot. If you change your mind and decide to vote in person, you will need to bring the ballot with you to your precinct polling place and give it to the poll workers. They will void that ballot, and allow you to vote. Your other option is to take your vote by mail (absentee) ballot to your county auditor's office before 9 p.m. on Election Day (November 3). Do not drop your mail-in ballot in the mail on November 3 - it will not count.

Iowa Voter Calendar

Oct. 5: Vote by mail or in-person early voting begins.

Oct. 24: Last day county auditors can take requests to vote by mail (must be received by 5 p.m.) County auditor offices are also open all day (9 am-5 pm) for in-person early voting.

Oct. 31: County auditor offices are also open for at least eight hours (usually 8-4 or 9-5 pm) for in-person early voting.

Nov. 2: Last day for in-person early voting in county auditor offices. All mail-in votes must be mailed by this day in order to be counted. That means before your post office closes for the day.

Nov. 3: ELECTION DAY!

OCTOBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

NOVEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
	1	2
		3

If you requested to vote by and were not able to mail it back by Nov. 2 – you can either take it to your county auditor on Election Day or surrender it at your polling site where they will let you vote in person.

VOTE 2020: Know Your Rights

Iowans with disabilities face many barriers when it comes to voting, so election officials have tried hard to address barriers by training poll workers and developing lists of rights that people have. You can see the Iowa DD Council/Iowans with Disabilities in Action handout on voting rights in English and Spanish at <https://bit.ly/30JinzC>.

- **Voters who are 18 years old and registered to vote in Iowa have the right to vote in Iowa elections.** To register to vote you must be at least 18 years old on or before election day (November 3, 2020).
- **Voters will be asked to show an ID before voting.** A voter without one of the approved forms of ID may have the voter's identity attested to by another registered voter in the precinct or may prove identity and residence using Election Day Registration documents.
- **Voters have the right to vote a provisional ballot** if their eligibility to vote is questioned.
- **Voters who go to the wrong precinct to vote must be given their correct precinct location** by precinct poll workers.
- **Voters have the right to vote by themselves or with help.** Voters may choose who helps them, but it cannot be their employer or an officer of their union. Voters with a conservator or guardian have the right to vote unless a judge has specifically said in a court ruling they may not.
 - Voters have the right to vote the way they choose.
 - Voters have the right to get help by calling one of the numbers below if someone tries to stop them from voting.
 - Voters have the right to be shown how to make their choices on the ballot.
- **Voters waiting in line when the polling site closes must be allowed to vote.**
- **Voters have the right to vote curbside at their polling location.** Two precinct election officials, one from each political party in partisan elections, will bring voting materials to you in your car. You can then mark your ballot in your car. Remember to call your county auditor to let them know you are going to vote and need to vote curbside; they will make sure your precinct officials are ready for you.

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For questions or to report a violation of your voting rights, call:

Disability Rights Iowa at (800) 779-2502

ACLU's non-partisan Election Protection Hotline: (866) OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683)

Iowa Secretary of State at (888) 767-8683

For additional information on your rights and what to do if they are violated at:

www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/voting-rights/disabilityrightsiowa.org/wp-content/uploads/Know-Your-Rights.pdf

FOCUS: Guardianships and Voting

Having a guardian or conservator does NOT impact your right to vote. **You are eligible to vote even if you have a guardianship or conservatorship set up.** You do not need a guardian's permission to vote, and who and how you vote for is your choice!

In Iowa, a judge must specifically rule that you cannot vote in a special court hearing. This has been done so rarely that the county auditors could not remember a single case of this happening. **Contact Disability Rights Iowa at (800) 779-2502 if you are told that you cannot vote by an election official or your guardian, or have other questions about this.**

FOCUS: Voting Rights Restored for Some

If you have been convicted of a felony under Iowa law, you will want to read this. Until recently, Iowa was the only state to take away the voting rights of Iowans convicted of any felony, for life. Governor Kim Reynolds changed that by signing Executive Order 7, which automatically reinstated voting eligibility for most Iowans with felony convictions who have completed their terms of sentence, including probation, parole, supervised release, and special sentences (like those that require placement on the sex offender registry).

This means as of August 5, 2020, most of Iowa's 50,000 individuals who have completed their felony sentences have regained their right to vote. There are some that did not - people convicted of a felony under Chapter 707 (murder, voluntary manslaughter, felony involuntary manslaughter, homicide, serious injury by vehicle) are not eligible for automatic restoration and must still apply to have rights restored. In these cases, the Governor will look at the case and determine whether rights should be restored.

Please Note:

- **You do not have to pay off all fines, fees, and restitution in order to be eligible to vote.** Your obligation to pay those hasn't gone away; those debts simply are no longer tied to your ability to vote.
- **You still have to register to vote!** The Governor reinstated the right to vote, but you must still register to vote - to find out how, go to <https://bit.ly/34DKyRn>, Just remember that the deadline for pre-registering to vote is October 24; you can register on Election Day but you will need to bring a valid photo ID and proof of residency (utility bill, lease, bank statement) with you.
- If you were convicted of a misdemeanor (simple, serious, or aggravated), you never lost your right to vote and can vote.

The Iowa ACLU has put together excellent information in both English and Spanish written for individuals who either have had or want to have their voting rights restored at <https://bit.ly/2SEeRIG>. The Secretary of State also has information at <https://bit.ly/33GA3xo>.

Election Resources

Let us take a moment to give some props to the Iowa Secretary of State's Office. They have done a great job encouraging Iowans with disabilities to vote, and providing an accessible set of resources to help get you ready. County auditors have also worked hard to make sure all poll workers understand your rights and their responsibilities to accommodate you when voting. So really, it's up to you to take that next step and vote!

You can find videos & more information on voting with disabilities at sos.iowa.gov/disabilities.html. This includes:

- Video showing what a voter with disabilities can expect on Election Day (youtu.be/AKqBcBQvdZw).
- Video showing how to vote curbside (youtu.be/ajmPlx1rgzo).
- Video showing how to use the four different types of accessible voting machines.
- Links to the "Voting with Disabilities" brochure (<https://bit.ly/2FdzoKH>).
- Information on getting help to fill out your ballot. Remember you cannot have an employer or union representative help you - otherwise anyone else can help.

In addition, Disability Rights Iowa has made two videos available in English and Spanish on voting rights at <https://bit.ly/2GRWib2>, and Iowans with Disabilities in Action/Iowa DD Council have additional information at <https://idaction.org/vote/>.

VOTE 2020: Who's Running?

Now that you know how to vote, and you are getting your plan put together, now is the time to figure out WHO deserves your vote! You do not have to vote on every race or question on the ballot, but a little bit of research goes a long way. It is really important to do a little work to find out where the candidates stand on the issues you care about. You cannot always trust the political ads and the comments you see on social media. They can be misleading, so make sure you trust the sources of the information as you make your choices. Trusted news sources and candidate websites that outline their priorities are good starting points for information.

The following links will help you know more about some of the candidates on the ballot this year.

Candidates for President/Vice President:

- **Joe Biden/Kamala Harris (Democrat)** (<https://joebiden.com/joes-story/>)- you can also link directly to their disability issues at <https://joebiden.com/disabilities/>.
- **Donald Trump/Mike Pence (Republican)** (<https://www.donaldjtrump.com/about>)

Candidates for U.S. Senate:

- **Joni Ernst (Republican)** (<https://joniernst.com>)
- **Theresa Greenfield (Democrat)** (<https://greenfieldforiowa.com/about/>)

Candidates for U.S. House (Congress):

- To find out which Congressional District you live in, go to <https://bit.ly/2laLGod>.
- US House District 1: **Abby Finkenauer (Democrat)** (<https://www.abbyfinkenauer.com>) vs. **Ashley Hinson (Republican)** (<https://ashleyhinson.com>)
- US House District 2: **Rita Hart (Democrat)** (<https://www.ritahart.com>) vs. **Mariannette Miller-Meeks (Republican)** (<https://millermeeks2020.com>)
- US House District 3: **Cindy Axne (Democrat)** (<https://cindyaxneforcongress.com>) vs. **David Young (Republican)** (<https://youngforiowa.com>)
- US House District 4: **Randy Feenstra (Republican)** (<https://www.feenstraforcongress.com>) vs. **J.D. Scholten (Democrat)** (<https://www.scholten4iowa.com>)

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Candidates for Iowa House of Representatives:

- To find out which State House District you live in, go to <https://bit.ly/30PayZc>.
- Go to <https://bit.ly/3nuP3Xd> for Democratic candidates.
- Go to <https://bit.ly/3nxjzxx> for Republican candidates.

Candidates for Iowa Senate:

- Unfortunately neither party responded to our request for links to candidate books.
- You can find out which State Senate district you live in at <https://bit.ly/3jKOpCB>.
- You can find out who is running in your State Senate District at <https://bit.ly/34A6ddu>.
- A simple google search of the names of your candidates should help you find out more information.
- We will try to find more links here for you in the coming weeks, so watch for updates at infonetiowa.org.

2020 MYM! Legislative Panel

The Make Your Mark 2020 Conference went virtual this year with a series of Noon sessions that brought advocates with disabilities together with experts on various topics. The final session has always been a legislative panel co-moderated by Dave Price, a news reporter with WHO-TV and host of the political show The Insiders, and Brady Werger, self-advocate and Vice-Chair of the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council.

Panelists included Sen. Amanda Ragan of Mason City, Rep. Ann Meyer of Fort Dodge, Rep. Chris Hall of Sioux City, and John Hollinrake representing US Senator Joni Ernst.



Sen. Amanda Ragan



Rep. Ann Meyer



Rep. Chris Hall



John Hollinrake

As Dave Price began, "I think one of the coolest things about this every year is that there's always a representative from the Democratic and Republican side, and over the years that I've agreed to do this, the elected officials don't fake this stuff. This is stuff they really believe in." Price went on to say "It definitely shows the individual commitment that you all have."

You can get all the advice from our experts by watching the video at <https://bit.ly/2Fdiegd>. As Rep. Hall said, "Every person who votes is going to have an impact on the process. The most important thing is that you choose to vote and you go and exercise that constitutional right." Rep. Ann Meyer added that voting was the great equalizer, "We all have exactly one vote, and this is the time to make it count." Sen. Amanda Ragan said a lot of work has gone into making voting easy, "Everyone wants this to work in Iowa, and our county auditors have put in the extra tie to make it as accessible as possible."

We had a special call-in from Sen. Mark Costello of Imogene, who dialed in from a family trip. Sen. Costello told us that he wanted to participate even though he was on vacation because of his friendship with co-moderator Brady. "He has always been a good supporter of mine, so I want to be a good supporter of him," said Sen. Costello in a phone call before the panel. This is what happens when you self-advocate. You get to know your legislator, then you help them out. You help them, they want to help you. It's a simple formula, but few people do it. It's how advocacy is done - get to know your elected officials, stay in contact, and work with them to address the things that matter to you.

"I always try to listen and stay involved, and I appreciate that (Brady) stays in touch and invites me to things. I just want to let everyone know that I'm listening and trying to find solutions for you and see what we can do on the state level working with Senator Ragan and other Senators to see what we can do together," said Sen. Costello.

So let's do this - VOTE on (or before) November 3, 2020.

You can watch the full (one hour) panel presentation and discussion on various issues at <https://bit.ly/3iMHwiJ>.

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c/o Iowans with Disabilities in Action

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Permit No.

Representing you in Congress:

Sen. Charles Grassley

Sen. Joni Ernst

Rep. [Representative]

Representing you at the State Capitol:

Sen. [Name-Senate]

Rep. [Name-House]

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IOWA'S DISABILITY POLICY RESOURCE