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Third Party Ballot Collection Policies

No updates required since July 31, 2023

Background

MAP has analyzed each state law to determine whether a given state's restrictions on ballot collection are overly burdensome to voters. Restrictions on ballot collection can disproportionately affect Native voters, disabled voters, and other voters in remote locations. Factors considered in our scoring include:

1) Who can collect a ballot; 2) How many ballots can be collected; 3) In what circumstances ballot collection is allowed; 4) Whether compensation is prohibited for ballot collection; 5) Time limits in which ballots must be returned; 6) Criminal penalties associated with ballot collection; and 7) Other restrictions such as requiring notarization.

Scoring

- State only allows the voter to return mail ballot, -1/2 point
- State overly restricts ballot collection, -1/4 point
- State does not overly restrict ballot collection or has no restrictions, 0 points

Summary Table

Category	Number	List
State does not overly restrict ballot collection or has no restrictions	17 states & D.C.	Alaska California Colorado Delaware D.C. Hawaii Idaho Illinois Montana Nebraska Nevada New York Oregon Rhode Island South Carolina Vermont Washington Wyoming



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State overly restricts ballot collection	28 states	Arizona Arkansas Connecticut Florida Georgia Indiana Iowa Kansas Kentucky Louisiana Maine Maryland Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Mississippi Missouri New Hampshire New Jersey New Mexico North Carolina North Dakota Ohio Oklahoma Pennsylvania Texas Utah West Virginia
State only allows the voter to return mail ballot	5 states	Alabama South Dakota Tennessee Virginia Wisconsin



State-by-State Sources and More Detail

Alabama (-1/2)

- State only allows voter to return mail ballot except in cases of medical emergency (Ala. Code § 17-11-18).

Alaska (0)

- State allows a friend, relative or associate to deliver a ballot to the postal service or private commercial delivery service. Voters unable to vote in person may designate a personal representative to return their ballot (Alaska Stat. § 15.20.081(a)).

Arizona (-1/4)

- State allows family members, household members, or caregivers to return mail ballot. Any unauthorized person who knowingly collect ballots is subject to felony charges (Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-1005).

Arkansas (-1/4)

- State allows voters to designate an agent to return mail ballot. These agents must show photo ID when returning ballots and are limited to returning no more than two ballots (Ark. Code Ann. § 7-5-403).

California (0)

- State allows voters to designate any person to return mail ballot. Compensation to return ballots is prohibited (Cal. Elec. Code § 3017).

Colorado (0)

- State allows voters to designate any person to return mail ballot. No person other than a duly authorized agent of the county clerk and recorder or designated election official may receive more than 10 mail ballots in any election for mailing or delivery (Colo. Rev. Stat § 1-7.5-107).

Connecticut (-1/4)

- State allows voter's family member to return mail ballot, or a designee if the voter is ill or disabled (C.G.S.A. § 9-140b).



Delaware (0)

- State does not specify any restrictions on ballot collection (Del. Code Title 15 § 5507).

D.C. (0)

- Does not specify restrictions on ballot collection generally. A voter may return an emergency ballot through a designated agent if the voter is unable to be present at the polls due to an illness or accident or the voter is serving on a sequestered jury on Election Day (D.C. Mun. Regs. Tit. 3, § 722).

Florida (-1/4)

- State restricts any person from possessing more than two mail ballots. Paid ballot harvesting is also prohibited (Fla. Stat. Ann. § 104.0616; 101.6103).

Georgia (-1/4)

- State allows relatives, household members, caregivers, or jail employees for voters in custody, to return mail ballots. Any person is prohibited from assisting more than ten voters in an election (Ga. Code Ann., § 21-2-385).

Hawaii (0)

- State allows a voter to designate an agent to return mail ballot. No other restrictions are specified. (Haw. Code R. § 3-177-650).

Idaho (0)

- State does not specify restrictions on ballot collection.

Illinois (0)

- State allows voter to authorize any person to return mail ballot. No other restrictions are specified (10 ILCS 5/19-6).

Indiana (-1/4)

- State allows a member of a voter's household, family member or voter's attorney to return mail ballot. No other restrictions are specified. (Ind. Code Ann. § 3-11-10-1).

Iowa (-1/4)

- State allows voter's immediate family or household members to return mail ballot. Disabled voters may designate an agent; such agents are subject to additional restrictions. Ballots must be returned within 72 hours of receipt or before the close of polls on Election Day (Iowa Code §53.17; § 53.33).



Kansas (-1/4)

- State allows voter to designate any person to return mail ballot. State requires voter and designee to sign a statement attesting that undue influence has not been exercised over the voter, and the designee has not collected more than ten ballots in the election. The statement must be delivered with the ballot (Kan. Stat. Ann. §25-1128; 25-1124).

Kentucky (-1/4)

- State allows voter's family, household member, or caregiver to return mail ballot. No other restrictions are specified ([KY HB 574](#) (2021)).

Louisiana (-1/4)

- State allows voter to designate any person to return mail ballot. Designees other than immediate family members are prohibited from returning more than one ballot (La. Rev. Stat. § 18:1308).

Maine (-1/4)

- State allows voter to designate any person to return mail ballot. Ballots must be returned within two days of receipt. If the designee is not an immediate family member, the ballot must be notarized or signed by two witnesses before return. (Me. Stat. tit. 21-A, § 753-B; 754-A(2)).

Maryland (-1/4)

- State allows voter to designate any person over 18 who is not a candidate to return mail ballot. The voter must complete a written statement and the designee must sign an affidavit (MD Code, Election Law, § 9-307).

Massachusetts (-1/4)

- State allows a voter's family member to return mail ballot. No other restrictions are specified (M.G.L.A. 54 § 92).

Michigan (-1/4)

- State allows a voter's immediate family member or a person residing in the voter's household to return mail ballot. No other restrictions are specified (M.C.L.A. 168.764a).

Minnesota (-1/4)

- State allows voter to designate any person to return mail ballot. A third party may not return the ballots of more than three voters (Minn. Stat. Ann. § 203B.08).



Mississippi (-1/4)

- State prohibits hand delivery of ballots by any person, including the voter. State also prohibits knowingly collecting or transmitting a ballot that was mailed to another person, except for family members, household members, or caregivers of a voter, election officials engaged in official duties, U.S. Postal Service employees, or other individuals authorized to carry mail. ([Mississippi Secretary of State](#)).
- Note: In July 2023, a federal District Court temporarily blocked enforcement of some provisions of Mississippi's ballot collection law relating to third party assistance and related criminal penalties. Mississippi law still provides that only the voter themselves may return their ballot in person. The challenged provisions apply to third party assistance in returning ballots through the mail.

Missouri (-1/4)

- State allows voter's relative who is within the second degree of consanguinity or affinity to return ballot. No other restrictions are specified (V.A.M.S. 115.291).

Montana (0)

- State's ballot collection law is currently blocked from enforcement by a federal court injunction, therefore no law is currently in effect ([Western Native Voice v. Stapleton](#)).

Nebraska (0)

- State does not specify restrictions on ballot collection.

Nevada (0)

- State allows voter to designate any person to return mail ballot. No other restrictions are specified (Nev. Rev. Stat. §293.353).

New Hampshire (-1/4)

- State allows voter to designate a relative, care facility administrator, or person giving assistance to a blind or disabled voter, to return mail ballot. Individuals assisting blind or disabled voters who are not relatives or nursing care staff are limited to returning the ballots of four voters. Designees must complete a form and present ID upon return (N.H. Rev. Stat. §657:17).

New Jersey (-1/4)

- State allows an authorized messenger to return a voter's ballot. The person must certify that they received the ballot directly from the voter, and no other person, and is authorized to deliver the ballot on behalf of the voter. No person shall serve as an authorized messenger for more than three qualified voters in an election. No person who is a candidate in the election for which the voter requests a mail-in ballot shall be permitted to serve as an authorized messenger or bearer (N.J. Stat. Ann. §19:63-9; §19:63-16).



New Mexico (-1/4)

- State allows a voter's caregiver or member of that voter's immediate family to deliver that voter's absentee ballot to the county clerk in person or by mail, provided that the voter has subscribed the outer envelope of the absentee ballot (N.M. Stat. Ann. § 1-6-10.1).

New York (0)

- State does not specify restrictions on ballot collection.

North Carolina (-1/4)

- State allows a voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian to return an absentee ballot (N.C. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 163-231).

North Dakota (-1/4)

- State allows voter to designate any person, except a candidate, to return mail ballot. Compensation is prohibited and no designee may return more than four ballot (ND Cent. Code § 16.1-07-08).

Ohio (-1/4)

- State allows voter's immediate family members to return mail ballot. No other restrictions are specified (Ohio Rev. Code § 3509.05).

Oklahoma (-1/4)

- State allows a voter's spouse to return mail ballot. Incapacitated voters may designate an agent (26 Okl. St. § 14-101.1).

Oregon (0)

- State allows voters to designate any person to return mail ballot. Ballots must be returned within two days of receipt (Ore. Rev. Stat. §254.470).

Pennsylvania (-1/4)

- State prohibits ballot collection by any third party except for disabled voters (25 P.S. § 3146.6).

Rhode Island (0)

- State does not specify restrictions on ballot collection.

South Carolina (0)

- State allows voter to designate any person to return ballot, except a candidate or campaign worker (S.C. Code §7-15-385).



South Dakota (-1/2)

- State only allows confined voters to designate a person to return ballot (S.D. Codified Laws § 12-19-2.2).

Tennessee (-1/2)

- State does not allow third party ballot collection (Tenn. Code Ann. §2-6-202).

Texas (-1/4)

- State restricts ballot collection in the following manner: a person possessing an envelope of another voter does not commit an offense if that person is related to the voter within the second degree by affinity or the third degree by consanguinity; physically living in the same dwelling as the voter; a person who possesses a ballot or carrier envelope solely for the purpose of lawfully assisting a voter who was eligible for assistance; a U.S. postal service employee; or a common or contract carrier (V.T.C.A., Election Code § 86.006).

Utah (-1/4)

- State allows members of voter's household to return mail ballot. Certain categories of voters needing assistance may designate an unrelated third party (Utah Code § 20A-3a-501(5)).

Vermont (0)

- State prohibits candidates and paid campaign staff from delivering ballots of voters other than their immediate family. The bill also prohibits any individual, other than a justice of the peace, from returning more than 25 ballots to a town clerk or drop box (VT SB 15 (2021)).

Virginia (-1/2)

- State only allows ballot collection in emergency circumstances (VA Code Ann. § 24.2-705).

Washington (0)

- State does not specify restrictions on ballot collection.

West Virginia (-1/4)

- State allows voter to designate any third party to return ballot. No person may return more than two voter's ballots (W. Va. Code § 3-3-5).

Wisconsin (-1/2)

- State Supreme Court has ruled that only the voter may return their mail ballot ([Teigen v. Wisconsin Election Commission](#) (2022)).

Wyoming (0)



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- State does not specify restrictions on ballot collection.

Democracy Map & Additional Resources

- See our Democracy Map, [Third Party Ballot Collection](#), which is updated in real time.