

Why do Mail-In Ballots in Michigan Get Rejected?

An Analysis by Promote the Vote Michigan

Introduction

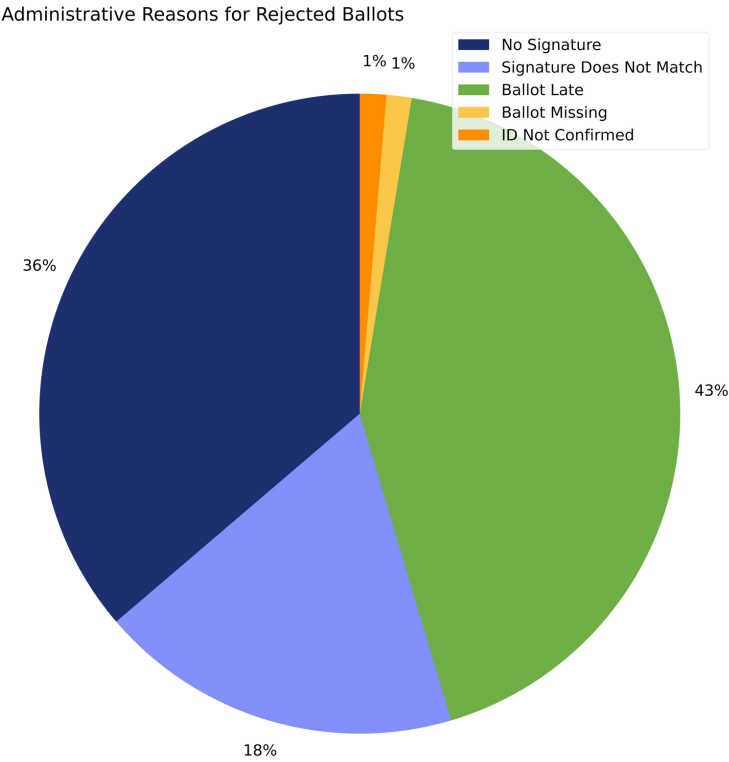
A total of 97,972 mail-in ballots were rejected in Michigan in during the general election in 2020, the vast majority of which were rejected for non-administrative reasons (e.g., the voter moved jurisdictions, the voter ended up casting their ballot at the polls, or the voter was sentenced to a prison term). However, Promote the Vote estimates that 7% of absentee ballots--representing almost 7,000 potential voters--were rejected by the Secretary of State for administrative-related reasons. These include ballots mailed without signatures, ballots **that were postmarked/received past the deadline**, or instances when a voter's identification could not be confirmed.

In Promote the Vote's priority jurisdictions, ballots rejected for administrative reasons represent almost 18% of total ballots rejected in these jurisdictions in 2020, or over 3,200 potential voters. The following report provides an in-depth look at the reasons for rejection in these focus jurisdictions.

The major reasons for rejection, **as outlined by the Secretary of State's office**, is as follows:

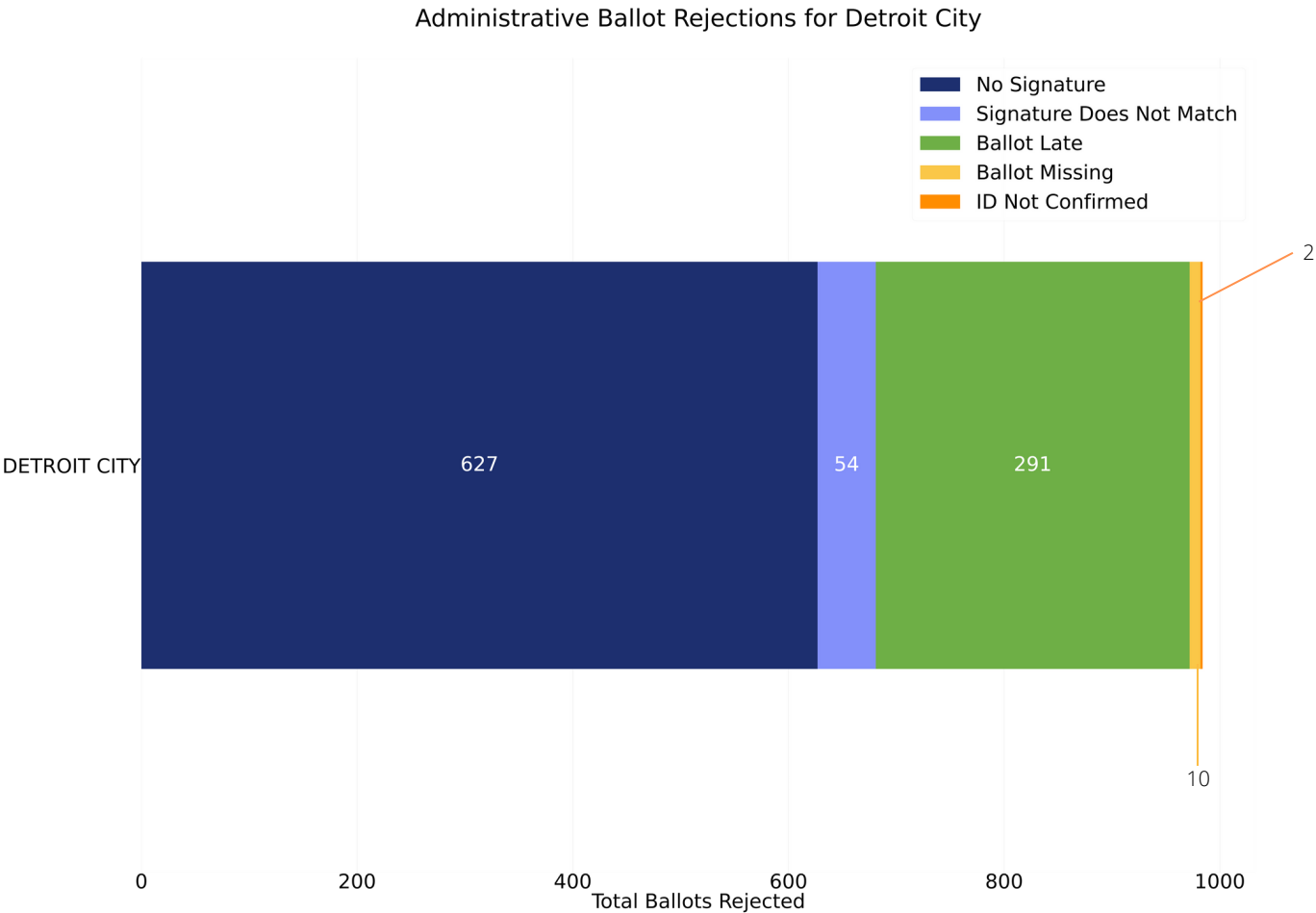
- **No Signature:** The ballot was not signed
- **Signature Does Not Match:** The signature was determined not to match the signature on file with the Secretary of State's office
- **Ballot Late:** The ballot was **postmarked/arrived past** the deadline
- **No Ballot in Envelope:** The envelope did not contain a ballot
- **ID Not Confirmed:** The voter's identification could not be confirmed for first-time voters who registered by mail

The chart to the right summarizes the administrative-related reasons for rejection of ballots in Promote the Vote's focus jurisdictions. As shown in the chart, nearly half of ballots in the group were rejected because the ballot arrived **past the postmark deadline**. Another third of ballots were rejected because they arrived without a signature, while the remaining ballots were rejected either because the signature did not match, the ballot was missing from the envelope, or the voter's identification could not be confirmed.



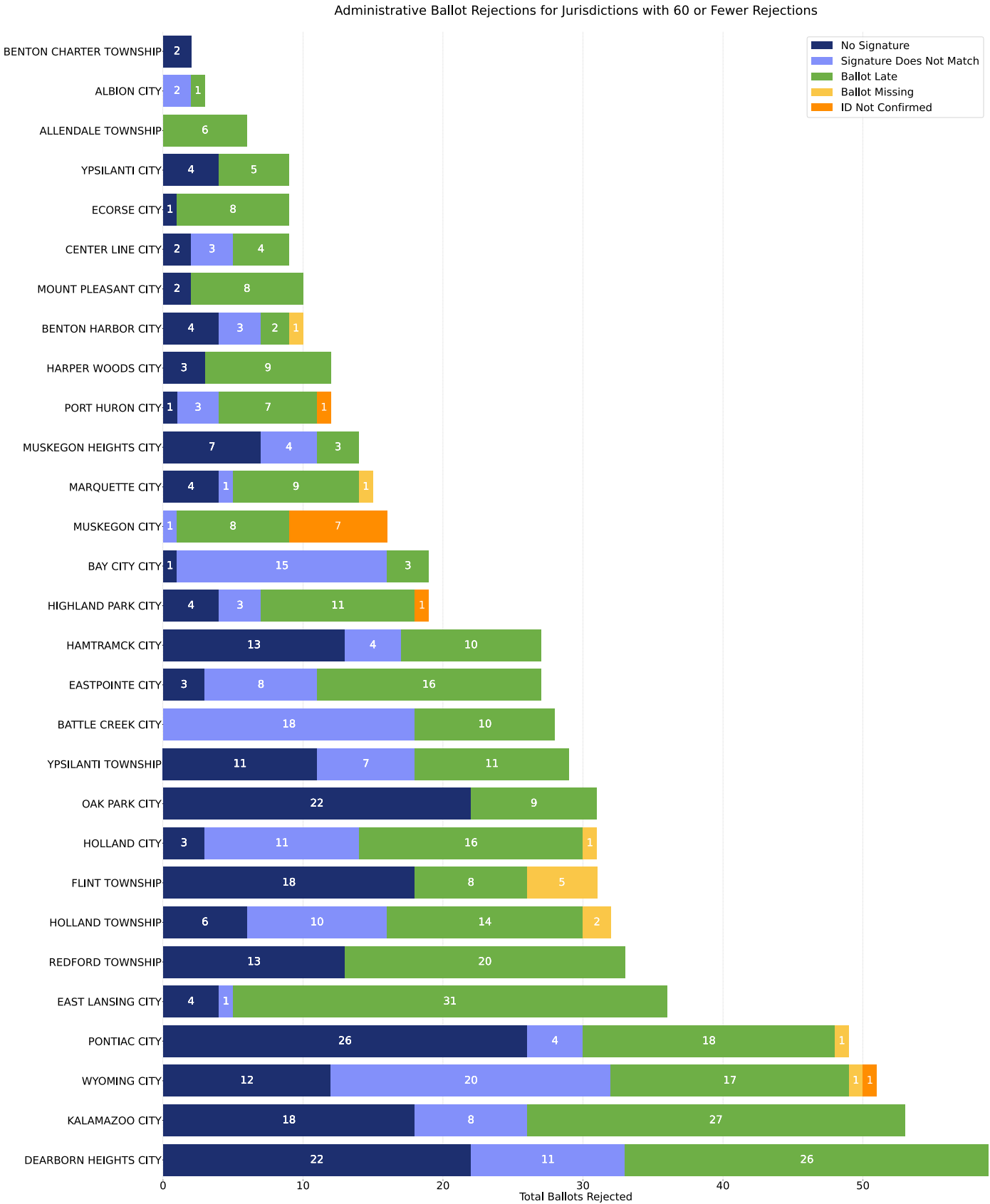
Rejections in Detroit

The below chart provides a breakdown of the administrative-related rejected ballots for Detroit City, as this jurisdiction accounted for nearly a third of administrative rejections in Promote the Vote's focus areas (a total of 984 ballots were rejected for administrative reasons). Note that 10 ballots were rejected because the ballot was missing from the envelope, and two were rejected because the voter's ID could not be confirmed.



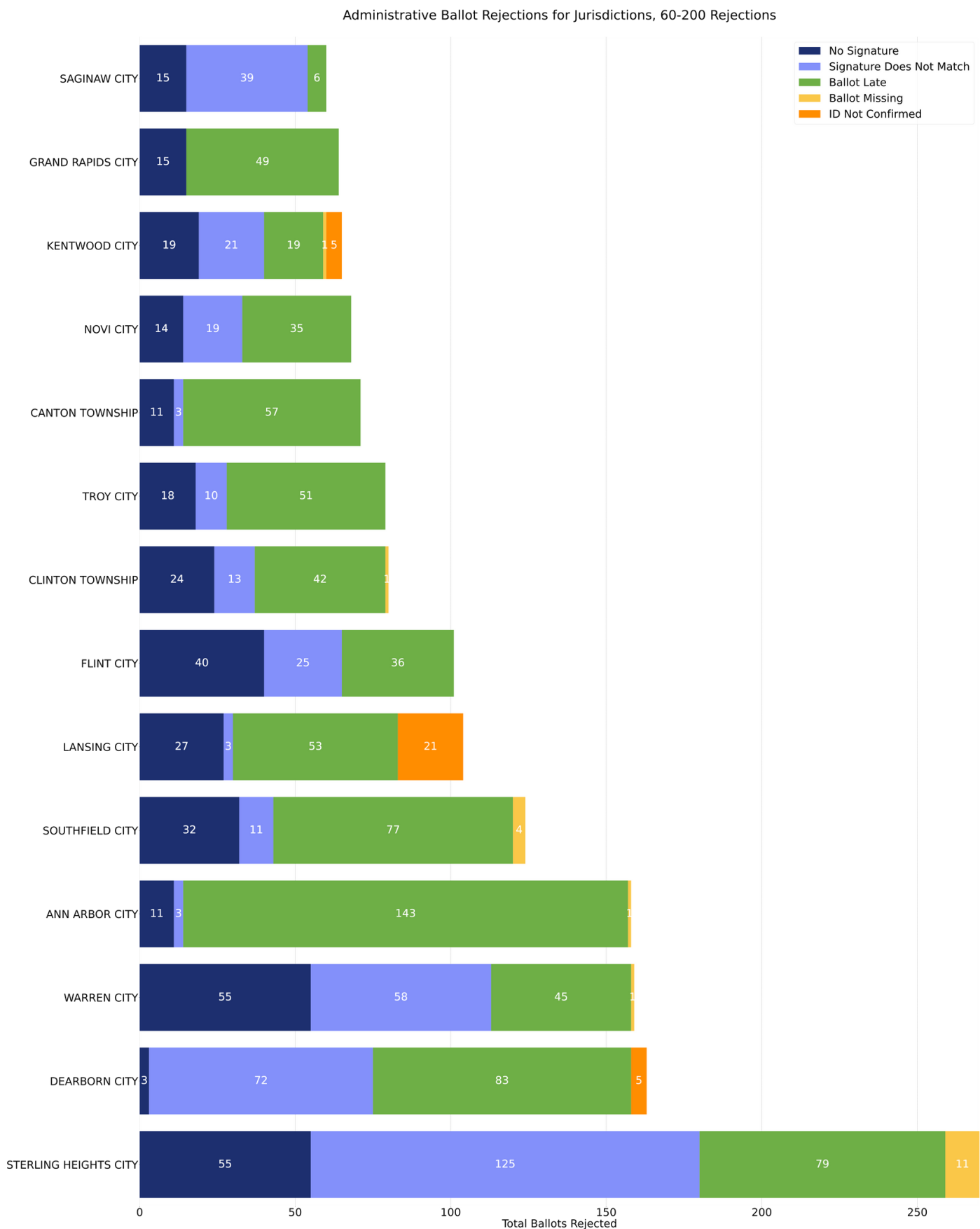
Rejections by Jurisdiction

The below chart provides a breakdown of the administrative-related rejected ballots, as well as the reasons for rejection, for smaller jurisdictions with 60 or fewer rejected ballots. Note that River Rouge City, Buena Visa Charter Township, Covert Township, Harris Township, Clyde Township, and Royal Oak Township were omitted, as these jurisdictions had zero reported administrative-related ballot rejects in 2020.



Rejections by Jurisdiction (continued)

The following chart details the instances of the administrative-rejected ballots, as well as the reasons for rejection, for jurisdictions that had between 60 and 200 ballots rejected for administrative reasons. Note that River Rouge City, Buena Vista Charter Township, Covert Township, Harris Township, Clyde Township, and Royal Oak Township were omitted, as these jurisdictions had zero reported administrative-related ballot rejects in 2020.



Rejection Rates by Jurisdiction

The below chart provides a summary of the proportion of total administrative ballot rejections occupied by each rejection category outlined on page 1.

