

### ANALYSIS OF AREAS WITH MAIL BALLOTS

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES
FROM: RAGNAR RESEARCH

SUBJECT: THE IMPACT OF VOTING BY MAIL

**DATE:** APRIL 3, 2020

# The Impact of Voting By Mail

In a rapidly changing environment, it is difficult to plan voter contact. While the response nationwide to the coronavirus pandemic continues to evolve, we cannot expect concrete answers on primary dates and voting methods anytime soon. But at this point we can expect a significant increase in voting by mail, regardless of whether in-person voting is allowed or not.

Two weeks ago our polling indicated that over two in three likely voters nationwide take the pandemic 'very seriously'. Recent public polling shows that number is holding. It is reasonable to assume voters will want to cast their ballots from the safety of their homes and it is possible it may be their only option.

The unprecedented nature of this situation makes it difficult to predict the impact mail ballots may have on elections. However, we can look to several examples at the state and local level in areas that already

use all or use mostly mail ballots.

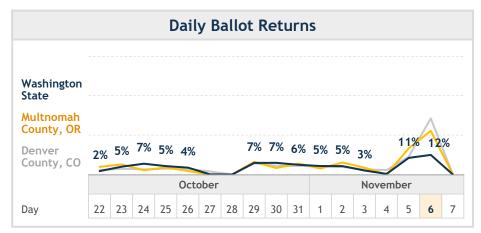
These areas generally send out ballots 22 to 18 days before election day. Analysis shows that ballots are returned evenly across the few weeks preceding election day. This means that roughly 25% of ballots are decided and returned two weeks before election day.

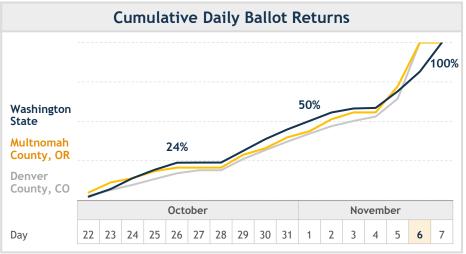
In addition, we found that absentee ballots were returned as early as mid-September, over a month before the election.

With this in mind, we recommend campaigns begin sustained voter contact earlier than normal.

Despite primaries being delayed, data shows that voters in areas where mail is an option are more likely to decide their ballots earlier.

Campaigns need to be proactive in capturing these early ballots.







# **Appendix**

# **About Ragnar Research**

With over 40 years of combined experience in public opinion research, the partners at Ragnar Research have a track record of getting the numbers right on behalf of candidates, colleges and universities, and Fortune 500 companies. The principals at Ragnar have conducted public opinion research in Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

## Seriousness Of Coronavirus

Interviews were conducted March 18 through March 22, 2020 by blended mode, including live telephone operators (26%) and text-to-web (74%). Telephone interviews include landlines (3%) and cell phones (23%). Interviews include 800 Likely Voters (LVs) nationwide. Quotas on age, gender, ethnicity, education, and region were used to ensure a representative distribution. The study's margin of error is ±3%.

#### **Question Text**

Overall, how serious do you think the current coronavirus pandemic is? Would you say that it is ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM very serious, somewhat serious, not so serious, or not serious at all?

#### **Recent Public Polling On Seriousness**

<sup>1</sup>Marquette University Law School Poll - 68% of Registered Voters indicate they are 'very concerned' about the coronavirus epidemic; <a href="https://law.marquette.edu/poll/category/results-and-data/">https://law.marquette.edu/poll/category/results-and-data/</a>

# Sources For Daily Return Data

Washington State 2018 General Election Daily Returns; <a href="https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/research/election-results-and-voters-pamphlets.aspx">https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/research/election-results-and-voters-pamphlets.aspx</a>

Multnomah County, Oregon 2018 General Election Daily Returns; <a href="https://multco.us/elections/november-6-2018-election-results">https://multco.us/elections/november-6-2018-election-results</a>

Denver County, Colorado 2018 General Election Daily Returns;

https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/denver-elections-divison/data-maps/return-data-archive.html