U.S. Postal Service Provides Recommendations for Successful 2020 Election Mail Season

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Today the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) released a letter that is being sent to local and state election officials and state party officials around the country. This letter highlights key aspects of Election Mail delivery processes â€" and ways to help educate the public on what to expect when using the mail to vote.

The letter, signed by USPS General Counsel and Executive Vice President Thomas J. Marshall, is a continuation of an ongoing outreach effort aimed at educating all interested parties about the Postal Service's mailing requirements and services in advance of the 2020 elections.

"It is critical that the Postal Service's delivery standards be kept in mind when informing voters how to successfully participate in an election using the mail," says Marshall, noting the importance of this information "when state and local election officials are making decisions as to the establishment of deadlines and the means used to send a piece of Election Mail to voters."

The letter and the accompanying Publication 632, State and Local Election Mail — User's Guide, are intended to provide boards of election and other election officials the tools needed to make the upcoming elections more successful when voting by mail. These guides are a follow-up to the more extensive 2020 Official Election Mail Kit (Kit 600), which was distributed to 11,500 election officials in March. All of these materials are also available on the Postal Service's Election Mail website, about.usps.com/election-mail/election-mail-resources.htm.

Publication 632 includes an overview of how to properly use the mail during the election process, the mailing standards of the Postal Service, postmarking guidelines and the specifics of military, diplomatic and overseas mailing instructions. The Postal Service has personnel ready to assist election officials with mailpiece design and everything else needed for a successful election cycle.

The letter also provides Postal Service recommendations on how to ensure the efficient and timely handling of mail pertaining to elections. The Postal Service recommends that election officials use First-Class Mail, which is typically delivered in 2 to 5 days, for all Election Mail and to allow

one week for delivery to voters. USPS further recommends election officials use Intelligent Mail barcodes for all Election Mail. The Postal Service has designed an Intelligent Mail barcode identifier specifically for ballots, to increase mailpiece visibility within the processing system. The identifier can be used by both the Postal Service and the mailer to track ballot deliveries and returns.

The letter notes that voters should be made aware of the mail delivery standards and transit times both when requesting an absentee ballot be mailed to them and when deciding when to mail the ballot back to election officials. The Postal Service recommends that voters mail their ballots at least one week before the due date and that they should contact local election officials for information about the specific deadlines.

The Postal Service is proud of its role as an important component of the nation's democratic process and remains committed to providing the resources needed to implement a successful election season.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

Source: USPS

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