



**U.S. Senator
Maria Cantwell**
Washington

SNAPSHOT REPORT:

Increases in Late Postmarking Disenfranchised WA Voters

Under President Donald Trump, vote-by-mail is under attack. His administration has sought to undermine vote-by-mail with baseless claims of widespread fraud. He has sought to allow the federal government to disqualify voters from receiving ballots. Judges have blocked the worst of Trump's proposals, thanks to lawsuits filed by Washington state and other states.

During Trump's presidency, the United States Postal Service (USPS) has taken steps to hamstring mail-in voting. In December, USPS finalized a rule that requires ballots to be postmarked at regional processing and distribution centers, rather than at a community's local post office. Also, if a post office is more than 50 miles from a distribution center, mail is transported to the distribution center only once a day, instead of twice. Depending on where the ballot is mailed from, that transfer can take days or even more than a week.

Data and information about Washington state's August 2026 primary provided by the Office of the Washington Secretary of State indicates that USPS's new policies have accomplished Trump's aim – disenfranchising Americans who vote by mail.

- The rate of ballots that were rejected for late postmarks (referred to as "too-lates") **increased 32% in Washington state's August 2026 primary**, compared to the 2024 primary.
- **The rate of too-lates in 19 counties more than doubled** compared to 2024 – and in two counties, increased by more than 300%.
- Snohomish County officials tracking ballot deliveries to other WA counties found that **one batch which was sent Priority Mail and clearly marked as ballots took 20 days to arrive.**

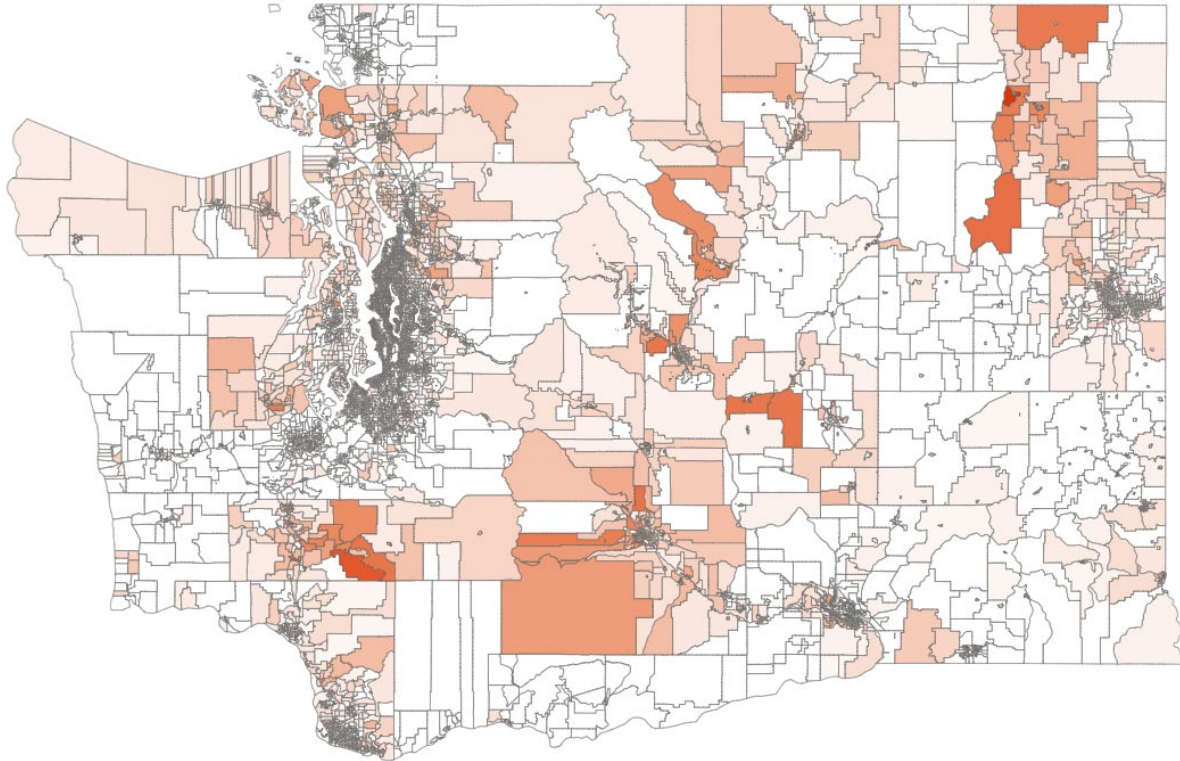
USPS Mail Service Disruptions and Delays

According to data from the Office of the Washington Secretary of State, thousands more ballots were rejected due to late postmarks in the 2026 primary than in the 2024 primary, despite fewer ballots being returned overall in 2026. Late-postmarked ballots were reported across the state, with significant increases in some counties.

In Stevens County, Auditor Lori Larsen noticed the increase immediately and shared her concerns with the Office of the Washington Secretary of State. She noted that the county's ballot challenge rate was driven almost entirely by ballots received too late, sometimes referred to as "too lates":

"We are the second highest by percentage of received ballots, next to Yakima County, and we have almost twice the too-lates as the next closest county. I have done just a bit of analysis, and I am concerned that this is NOT a function of voter behavior, nor a result of wildfires, but may be a locally occurring USPS breakdown."

This newly-released map from the Washington Secretary of State's office [shows the number of too-late ballots for every voting precinct in the state](#). It allows citizens to see how many voters in their neighborhood lost their vote due to late postmarking. Counties with the most rejections are colored in shades of red.



<https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrljoiZjU0OTRlZlZmNWFhNC00NDczLk1NWUtOWJINjg5ZWQ4MWRkIiwidCI6ImUwMmRhYmUyLWMyY2ltNGU3YS1hMzcwLTkyZWQxZWVhbiVhMCJ9>

August's primary election saw dramatic increases in the percentage of votes disqualified as too-lates.

In 19 of Washington's counties, more than twice as many 2026 primary ballots were disqualified for late postmarks than in the 2024 primary election. In two counties – Mason and Stevens – the rate increased more than 300%.

County	Increase in Rate of Primary Election Too-Lates From 2024 to 2026
Mason	329.7%
Stevens	303.7%
Yakima	268.5%
Okanogan	263.5%
Franklin	206.0%
Pend Oreille	205.9%
Lewis	203.4%
Clallam	199.0%
Walla Walla	188.1%
Asotin	183.1%
Benton	141.6%
Douglas	136.7%
Whitman	133.2%
Skagit	132.0%
Chelan	125.7%
San Juan	121.5%
Klickitat	119.3%
Adams	117.4%
Wahkiakum	104.8%

Statewide, the too-late rate increased a significant but more modest 32%. This was driven by decreases in too-lates in some of the state's most populous counties.

County	Change in Rate of Primary Election Too-Lates From 2024 to 2026
Spokane	-12.4%
Pierce	-17.8%
King	-20.2%
Clark	-24.7%

A list of rates for all counties is available [HERE](#).

Sources: The Washington Secretary of State's data report for the 2026 primary is available at <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/data-research/election-data-and-maps/election-results-and-voters-pamphlets/2026-primary-election>; data for the 2024 primary is available at <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/data-research/election-data-and-maps/election-results-and-voters-pamphlets/2024-primary-election>

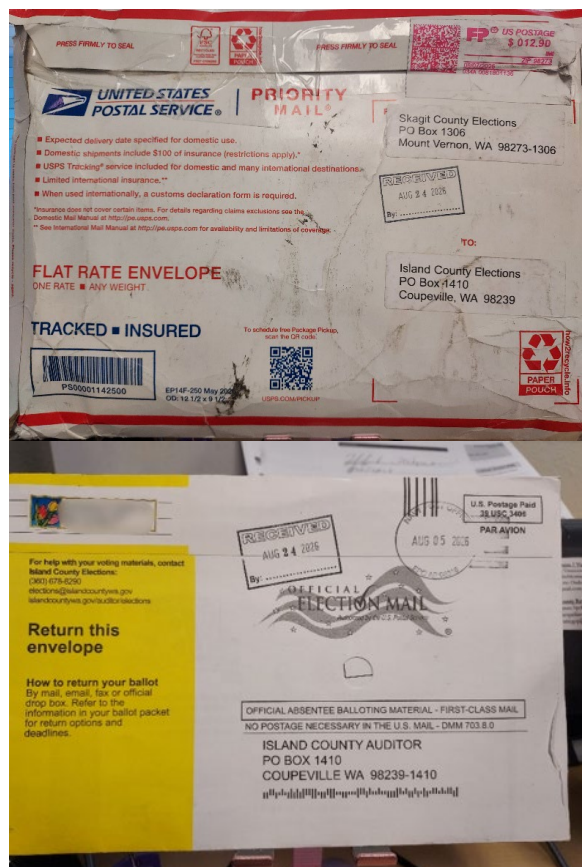
USPS Late Delivery of On-Time Ballots

Sometimes, voters drop their ballot in a drop box that's in a different county than the one where they are registered to vote. In these cases, counties mail these ballots to the appropriate county elections office. As long as the ballots are received by the county certification date – August 18, in the case of the most recent primary election – the ballots can be counted.

Snohomish County tracked the delivery of all ballot packages it mailed to other Washington counties and reported significant delays. County officials told the Washington Secretary of State's office that several packages arrived after August 18 despite being mailed well in advance. The average travel time was 5.6 days, with the longest at 20 days – nearly three weeks later.

Island County also reported delays that affected ballots that otherwise would have been counted. One overseas ballot was signed on July 29, and postmarked on August 5, but was not received until after the August 18 certification.

Island County also shared with the Washington Secretary of State's office that they received a USPS Priority Mailer sent by Skagit County bearing the required "Ballots Only" tag. The package was postmarked on August 7 but was not delivered until after certification.



These ballots would have counted had they been delivered before the county certification deadline. They are not included in the too-late counts above. They represent even more voters who were disenfranchised by USPS service reductions.

Additional Challenges and Costs of Election Administration

While the Trump Administration publicly calls for an end to election fraud, it has significantly reduced the federal election-security support system built largely in response to foreign interference in the 2016 election. This combined with reduced service by USPS has imposed additional costs as state election officials try to ensure safe and fair elections.

- The Department of Homeland Security terminated federal funding for the Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC) which provided election offices – especially smaller ones with fewer resources – with specialized cyber threat intelligence, information sharing, incident-response resources, and other cybersecurity services.
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation dissolved its Foreign Influence Task Force (FITF) in February 2025. FITF had coordinated investigations involving covert foreign influence from Russia, China, Iran, and other foreign actors. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency personnel working on foreign disinformation and election-security issues were also placed on administrative leave.

Following the loss of the EI-ISAC and federal support for related services, the Office of the Washington Secretary of State funded cybersecurity software memberships for itself and all 39 county auditors'/election offices, costing over \$13,000 annually.

Foreign intelligence information is one of the hardest capabilities for states to replace. States cannot realistically recreate the intelligence collection, counterintelligence authorities, international visibility, or national coordination capabilities of the federal government.

Due to concerns about USPS delivery – concerns that proved to be well-founded – the WA Elections Division has reimbursed \$357,647.67 to the counties for reprinting mailing envelopes and installing new ballot drop boxes. Additionally, the Office of the Washington Secretary of State has invested \$400,000 in voter education efforts to emphasize the use of ballot drop boxes to combat the decline in reliable postal delivery.

The True Story of Elections Under Trump

The data released today tells the true story of elections under the Trump Administration: more voters losing their voice, and higher costs for states and counties.

The Trump Administration's moves to degrade postal service and reduce election security funding mean that state officials, county election administrators – and voters – must take a more active role in securing the fairness of our democracy.