

PUBLIC INTEREST

— LEGAL FOUNDATION —

92K Clark County NV Mail Ballots Went to Wrong Addresses in 2020 Presidential Election

Statewide Trump/Biden Vote Difference Was 33K

March 2021 -- Clark County (Las Vegas metro) automatically sent actual mail ballots to every “active” registered voter on file for the 2020 Presidential Election. Nevada was among a small minority of states to perform mass mail balloting for primary and general elections due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Clark County 2020 General Election data show that **92,367 mail ballots were returned undeliverable** to wrong or outdated addresses. For a sense of scale, Former Vice President Joe Biden carried the whole of Nevada with a final lead of **33,596 votes**.

Totals	2020G	2020P
Total Mail Ballots Transmitted	1,277,897	1,325,934
USPS Undeliverable	92,367	223,469
Active Undeliverables	92,367	93,585
Inactive Undeliverables	--	129,884

Previous PILF reports showed that Clark County transmitted more than **223,000 mail ballots** to wrong or outdated addresses during the **spring primaries**. After that, the Nevada Legislature passed AB 4 and limited mass mailing for the general election to only active registrants in the fall.

Prior to the primary election, county officials testified that an all-county mailing would be needlessly expensive and result in significant numbers of ballots sent to wrong or outdated addresses because “inactive” registrants would be included in these mailings. They projected a cost of \$184,738 to send ballots to inactive registrants. They expected at least 90% would bounce back undeliverable in the mail.

Historic Context

According to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission Surveys spanning the 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018 General Elections, the entire state of **Nevada reported only 5,863 mail ballots returned undeliverable in total**.

If H.R. 1 Became Law...

H.R. 1 will make the situation even worse. The bill’s cosponsors designed it to shift elections to the mail in a relatively short period of time. The Nevada data offer exhaustive examples of the worst that can happen if this federal mandate becomes reality. Local governments will be forced to assume millions of dollars to **regress** to more analog, pen and paper systems while spending funds on the transmission of mail to obsolete addresses with mandatory pre-paid postage included. During the 2020 Primary, Clark County officials knew that ballots destined for “inactive” registrants would overwhelmingly return undeliverable. There were no indications, however, that more than 92,000 would bounce from “active” addresses throughout the cycle. As

a consequence of H.R. 1, registrants will have the added burden of tracking down their misdirected mail before Election Day activities are complete.

PILF President J. Christian Adams

“Mass-mail balloting is a step backward for American elections. There are millions of voter registration records with unreliable “active” address information that will ultimately send ballots to the wrong place in a mail election. H.R. 1 does more harm than good for the American people and will leave them at a constant disadvantage to correct election system errors which ultimately impact their abilities to vote in a timely manner.”

Sources

*Records Disclosed to PILF from Clark County Voter Registrar Joe Gloria (August 3, 2020), (February 2021)
NV-SOS 2020 Official Statewide General Election Results
U.S. Election Assistance Commission; 2012-2018 Election Administration & Voting Surveys*