



# NALC FACT SHEET

Department of Legislative and Political Affairs — National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO

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March 31, 2009

## Voting by Permanent Absentee Ballot

**I**n polling places all over the country, time and again, election results are skewed by malfunctioning equipment, human error, and under staffed polls. Permanent absentee ballots help fix many of these problems while increasing turnout by relying on something Americans trust: the United States Postal Service.

### Increasing voter turnout:

As our personal and professional lives become busier and more demanding, too many of us do not have the opportunity to make it to the polls on Election Day. Permanent absentee ballots are more convenient for all Americans. Voters do not have to take time off work or face long lines in bad weather. Disabled citizens wishing to cast a vote do not have to make special arrangements to get to the polls. Citizens can calmly consider difficult choices on their ballots in the privacy of their own homes instead of under pressure in the confines of a polling booth.

In Colorado, where voters were recently given the option to file a permanent absentee voter request, turnout reached almost 70 percent in the 2008 election. In fact, the Republican Secretary of State at the time, Mike Coffman, called permanent absentee voting as both “sensible” and “convenient.”

### Federal workers as protectors of the ballot:

As a trusted government agency, the USPS would be proud to protect the integrity of the American voting process. In 2007, the USPS was rated the number one agency Americans trust to protect their privacy. Voters know their ballots will be safely and securely delivered while in the hands of a trusted letter carrier.

### Advanced technology to secure against voter fraud:

Despite the massive gains in turnout in states like Colorado, no evidence

exists demonstrating that well-administered elections featuring large numbers of permanent absentee voters are prone to fraud. In fact, the ability to verify every voter signature with re-countable paper ballots, which Florida already has, makes permanent absentee elections both transparent and secure.

### What is the legal status of absentee ballots in Florida?

Florida allows both no-excuse absentee ballots and early voting at the polls. However, the current law lets a person vote by absentee ballot, but they must request a ballot after every two election cycles. Moving to Permanent no-excuse absentee ballots is the next step. Voters could request permanent absentee ballots and would automatically receive them by mail in every subsequent election, which would make a widely popular measure considerably more convenient.

### What is happening with permanent absentee ballots in the Florida Legislature?

State Sen. Nan Rich and State Rep. Keith Fitzgerald have submitted bills that would allow for permanent absentee ballots. S.B. 990 has been referred to the Ethics and Elections committee and H.B. 837 has been referred to the Government Affairs Policy committee. Both bills would make Florida the ninth state to move to permanent absentee ballots. The bills also provide for official absentee voter drop-boxes to be available on Election Day until the polls close at 7 p.m.

The NALC encourages Florida legislators to support permanent absentee ballot initiatives, and to cosponsor S.B. 990 and H.B. 837. For further information, please contact the NALC office of Legislative and Political Affairs at 202-662-2833.