The Phyllis Schlafly Report

The Folly of Vote-by-Mail for All

By John and Andy Schlafly

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The extended national lockdown caused by the coronavirus has led to many ideas for changing familiar patterns of the American way of life. But COVID-19 is no excuse for undermining the integrity of our presidential elections by switching from in-person to mail-in voting.

Until a few years ago, Election Day was a special event in which our sprawling nation came together on the same day to select our next president. Some states honor it with a holiday, and many employers give workers time off to vote.

Barely five months before the most important presidential election of our lifetime, with the Supreme Court on the line, is no time to convert the election machinery of more than 100,000 election precincts to an unprecedented, untested system of any kind. Yet Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer seeks to send absentee ballot applications to 7.7 million people on an error-ridden list of potential voters.

As President Trump rightly tweeted in response, “This was done illegally and without authorization. I will ask to hold up funding to Michigan if they want to go down this Voter Fraud path!”

California Governor Gavin Newsom is taking Michigan’s mistake one step further. He issued an executive order to mail not just an application, but the actual ballot to the state’s entire voter registration list riddled with inaccuracies.

No state has ever done that before, including the five states that conduct mail elections, because it invites voting by people who are not eligible to vote. Voter intimidation, coercion, fraud, and other forms of illegitimate voting would be possible under blanket mail-in voting.

A new federal lawsuit has been filed to block Governor Newsom’s scheme. “Fraudulent and invalid votes dilute the votes of honest citizens and deprive them of their right to vote in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment,” it says.

Until now, only five states mail unrequested ballots to registered voters, but those states take additional precautions such as requiring verification of voter registrations. None of the five is a swing or battleground state whose electoral vote for president is in doubt.

All other states allow some form of absentee voting, and most of those permit limited mail-in voting for those who request it. States can more easily manage the integrity of a small

number of mail-in ballots compared with being overwhelmed by everyone, even illegal aliens, voting by mail.

The costs are staggering, and states ask Congress to force taxpayers to foot the bill for this folly. Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi already allocated $400 million in the CARES Act as handouts to states for mail-in voting, but that is not nearly enough.

The last presidential election had more than 128 million votes cast, and tens of dollars per mail-in ballot in new costs would be needed for sending and processing them. Democrats want $4 billion in new federal funding to pay for mail-in voting now.

Democrats even want unions to be allowed to collect ballots, but that would add unwanted intimidation of voters to the process. Unionized workers should be free from union coercion when they mark their ballots.

Allowing votes to be mailed until Election Day means that counting ballots and declaring a winner may not occur until weeks later. The post office can take up to ten days to deliver a letter, particularly amid high volume, and in a close election the outcome could change when ballots are lost in the mail.

Our political prosperity depends on the smooth transition of power. It is essential that there be a prompt, legitimate presidential winner, but close elections awash in mailed ballots would frustrate that essential goal.

In the key swing state of Pennsylvania, mail-in voting is being adopted for the first time this year, with restrictions. Ballots must be received, not merely mailed, by Election Day, because many letters are not postmarked anymore.

Ballot harvesting is not allowed in Pennsylvania, which is the pernicious practice of paid workers mailing a bundle of ballots supposedly cast by others. Millions of demented nursing home patients can have their “votes” harvested in this manner for the unfair advantage of a candidate funding the harvesting.

Democrats pretend that voter fraud would be small for mail-in voting, but they do not consider ballot harvesting and other chicanery to be fraud. A generation ago, they did not consider the corrupt Democratic political machine in Chicago to be fraudulent, either.

Supporters of mail-in voting rely on polling which seems to indicate public support for it. But those polling questions avoid mention of the immense additional costs and the susceptibility of mail-in voting to manipulation and corruption.

President Trump is right to oppose this attempt by Democrats to change our election system. Federal funds should be withheld from states that undermine our elections as Democrats are trying to do.

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