

PRESS RELEASE

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IDAHO
SECRETARY OF STATE
LAWRENCE DENNEY

Voters Break Records with Ballot Requests for May Primary Election

Boise, Idaho – Based off of the number of statewide ballot requests, the 2020 May Primary Election is on track to have the largest voter turnout of any non-gubernatorial primary election in Idaho history, with the largest absentee request ever recorded. In total, just over 415,500 Idahoans had requested ballots as counties were wrapping up final data entry today. This represents almost 46% of the now 907,342 registered voters statewide. While this number is not yet a “turnout” number, as ballots are not due back to county clerks until 8pm on June 2, it does represent an unprecedented response, especially given the environment in which it happened. Using the March 2016 primary election for comparison, voter turnout was only 23% percent with 176,806 ballots cast.

“The numbers truly speak for themselves,” said Secretary of State Lawrence Denney. “Voting is a right Idahoans hold dear and they were not going to let the coronavirus get in their way of participating in the May Primary Election. We want to say thank you to all of the Idahoans who adapted with us through these changing circumstances. We also want to say thank you to all of the election workers across the state who have worked so hard over the last few months to keep Idahoans safe and make it possible for them to vote from home.”

While the number of ballots issued is up across the state, it is now up to Idaho voters to get those ballots returned by the deadline. “Voters who requested their ballot either May 18 or at the May 19 deadline will need to be patient,” says Chad Houck, Chief Deputy Secretary. “As of today, all counties have finished entering requests, and those ballots will be headed out to homes statewide as quickly as possible to give voters plenty of time to return their ballot by the deadline.”

That deadline is 8 p.m. on June 2. To properly return the ballot, voters must insert it into the privacy sleeve that comes in the packet, then place that into the second outer envelope, sign it, and seal it before mailing the voted ballot back to their local elections office. Ballots should be returned as soon as possible to ensure they are received by the deadline. All ballots were sent with a pre-addressed official return envelope, and most included pre-paid postage. For those without postage, grocers statewide have stepped in to assist voters in getting their ballots returned at no cost. (see <https://idahovotes.gov/grocery/> for details)

Ballots will be counted and unofficial election results will begin to be released the evening of June 2 at 8pm Pacific time. Official results will follow with the completion of the state election canvas.

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ABOUT LAWRENCE DENNEY

Lawrence Denney has served the people of Idaho since 1990. His public service began as a representative in District 13 and, following redistricting, he became a representative in District 9 until 2014. During that time, Denney served two terms as Majority Leader and three terms as Speaker of the House before successfully running for state office. He is currently in the first year of his second term as Idaho’s Secretary of State.

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