



STATE OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

DOUGLAS A. DUCEY
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

May 11, 2021

The Honorable Katie Hobbs
Secretary of State
1700 W. Washington, 7th Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Re: Senate Bill 1485 (early voting list; eligibility)

Dear Secretary Hobbs:

Today I signed SB 1485.

Arizona is a national leader when it comes to election integrity and access to the ballot box, and SB 1485 continues that legacy. In 1992, our state began offering the ability for Arizonans to vote an absentee ballot. Since then, Arizona has continuously improved and refined our election laws — including intuitively renaming “absentee” voting to “early” voting — and constantly seeking to strengthen the security and integrity of our elections:

- In 1993, legislation was signed to allow County Recorders to establish on-site absentee voting locations at their office or any other places in their county.
- In 1994, access to early voting was expanded further, allowing voters to request an early voting ballot verbally. The law previously required a signed request to a County Recorder.
- In 1997, “absentee voting” was renamed to “early voting.”
- In 2003, a law was enacted to ensure that early ballot requests were complete and correct in accordance with state law, ensuring that voters were following the legal requirements for receiving an early ballot.
- In 2007, the Permanent Early Voting List (“PEVL”) was established, allowing early voters to continue to vote early without having to request an early voting ballot each year.
- In 2008, access to early voting locations was expanded, requiring on-site early voting be open and available for use beginning the same day that a county begins to send out the early ballots.
- In 2011, the method to request an early ballot was further expanded, allowing candidates, political committees, and organizations to distribute permanent early voting list request forms to voters.

- In 2016, to increase the integrity of early voting, Arizona joined 18 other states in ensuring a secure chain of custody between voters and the ballot box, by prohibiting the mass collection of early ballots.
- In 2019, building on the election security reforms passed by voters in 2004 that required proof of citizenship for voter registration and proof of identification at polling places, I signed a law requiring proof of identification at on-site early voting locations.

Whether these reforms were incremental or breakthrough in nature, each one sought to strengthen trust, efficiency, security, and integrity in our election system. SB 1485 is a simple reform in that same tradition:

1. The PEVL is renamed the Active Early Voting List (AEVL).
2. If a voter on the AEVL actively votes by mail, they will continue to receive an early ballot.
3. If a voter on the AEVL does not return at least one early ballot over the course of four years (two consecutive primary elections and general elections, and any municipal elections that precede them) the voter will be sent a postcard asking if they still want to receive an early ballot. The county recorder may additionally reach the voter by telephone, text message, or e-mail.
4. Whether a voter opts to remain on the AEVL or not, they remain eligible to request an early ballot or vote in person, ensuring no voter is ever disenfranchised. There is absolutely no “purging” of voter registration lists, despite what some have said in an attempt to mislead the public.

This reform will free up dollars for election officials, ensuring that rather than sending a costly early ballot to a voter who has demonstrated they are not going to use it, resources can be directed to important priorities including voter education and election security measures.

Arizona is one of only five states with an early voting list, and this legislation mirrors the practice in California, which removes voters from the list if they do not actively vote. But unlike California, our law requires County Recorders to proactively reach out to voters, with ample notice, before they are removed. If this bill is as bad as some partisan activists have suggested — what does that say about their beloved California?

In Arizona, we’ve always prioritized access to the ballot, allowing a lengthy period for early voting — 26 days before the election, despite our relatively late primary election date. Compare this to some other places: New York (10 days), Delaware (10 days), and Washington, D.C. (seven days).

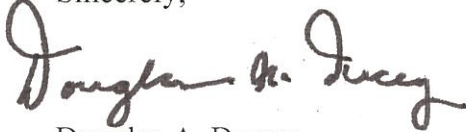
It’s clear I am very proud of Arizona’s election system, and I’ve been a vocal champion of it — from our State Capitol to the Oval Office. Because of that, some have suggested that means I can never ever support any improvements. That’s ridiculous. If prior leaders had taken that approach, none of the improvements listed above would have been enacted.

Others have suggested that “now is not the time” for election reform. I could not disagree more. The politics of the moment should not impede good policy, and SB 1485 is a measure that ensures our voting lists remain verified and accurate, will free up resources for local election officials, and strengthen trust among citizens in our election system.

Last year, while other states struggled to administer early voting in the face of a pandemic, Arizona shined — demonstrating the integrity we have built in our early voting system since 1992. We also kept in-person voting in place, and we did it safely. This, despite calls from some politicians to close down polling locations — a move that would have ultimately disenfranchised those committed to voting in person.

I am proud to sign SB 1485, ensuring Arizona remains a leader for inclusive, accessible, efficient, and secure election administration. I am thankful to the bill sponsor, Senator Michelle Ugenti-Rita, for crafting this reform, continuously improving it over time, and getting it across the finish line.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas A. Ducey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Douglas A. Ducey
Governor
State of Arizona

cc: The Honorable Karen Fann
The Honorable Rusty Bowers
The Honorable Michelle Ugenti-Rita