

Via Electronic Mail

October 30, 2024

Re: Ohio Secretary of State Absentee Ballot Return Guidelines

Hello,

The Ohio Secretary of State's office is reaching out to Ohio's nursing home, skilled nursing facilities, and assisted living associations to provide guidance on absentee ballot returns. Our office has received several questions on this topic, and we want to offer the following guidance.

Ohio law provides four ways for absentee ballots to be returned to the county Board of Elections:

- Regular delivery through USPS.
- Delivery of the ballot to the Board of Elections by the voter themselves.
- Delivery of the ballot of a disabled voter by any individual of the disabled voter's choosing (other than the voter's employer or agent of that employer or officer or agent of the voter's union, see 52 U.S.C. §10508).
- Delivery of the ballot by an immediate family member.
 - NOTE: Under Ohio law, eligible "family members" includes spouse, domestic partner, mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, half-brother, half-sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, grandmother, grandfather, aunt, uncle, child, stepchild, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, or other family member living in the same household.

Please note, Ohio law expressly prohibits returning another voter's ballot except in the two instances listed above. When returning a ballot on behalf of another voter, an individual must sign an attestation form at the county board of election declaring their identity and the name of the individual(s) whose ballot they are returning. More information on this topic can be found in the [Ohio Elections Officials Manual Ch. 7 \(pages 201-205\)](#) and in [Directive 2024-1](#), issued by our office.

Additionally, many nursing homes and assisted living communities work with local boards of elections to conduct onsite voting or absentee ballot collection. In these situations, two boards of elections employees, each belonging to a different major political party, are sent to the facility to assist eligible voters in casting their ballots. If your organization is interested in making these types of arrangements, please [contact your local board of elections](#), or reach out to me directly.

Thank you for the important work you do on behalf of Ohioans – and thank you for your help in ensuring every eligible voter can cast their ballot in a secure and accessible election. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alex Pavloff', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alex Pavloff
Public Affairs Manager