

In Alaska, A Special Election Reveals How The Left Wants To Rig The Vote

Next month, Alaskans will vote in a special primary election for the state's single congressional seat, left vacant by the death of Republican Rep. Don Young in March. Young, the longest-serving Republican in the history of the U.S. House, was Alaska's sole congressman for 49 years, so the election to replace him is in some ways an historic event for the state.

But it's also historic in another way: it will be Alaska's first ever statewide mail-in primary election. That is, there will be no in-person voting at all. Every single voter on the state's [bloated and error-riddled voter rolls](#) was automatically mailed a blank ballot.

What's more, there will be no verification requirements for these mail-in ballots. Voters will simply need to fill out their ballot and have a witness observe them sign the envelope. The state's Division of Election has explicitly said [it will not verify the authenticity of the signatures](#) on the ballots.

Normally, to vote by mail in Alaska you have to submit an absentee ballot application ahead of time, which includes a signature that can be used to verify the signature on the completed ballot. But not for this special mail-in election, which is already a chaotic and confusing mess, with [48 names on the primary ballot](#) and a new ranked-choice voting process in place that will send the top four vote-getters from the primary to the in-person general special election in August (which is on

the same day as the regular statewide primary election for the November midterms).

By any measure, Alaska's special election is a mess. But why should the rest of the country care? Because Alaska's insane statewide mail-in election is a template for how the left wants to run elections nationwide. Democrats and left-wing activists would love nothing more than to hold elections entirely by mail with as few safeguards in place to prevent ballot fraud.

Indeed, Alaska presents a unique and in some ways ideal test case for the left. For one thing, [Alaska's voter rolls are a mess](#). As of 2020, voter registration was 118 percent of the estimated vote age population, meaning there were more registered voters than actual people who could vote (this problem is getting worse in Alaska; in 2018 it was only 103 percent). Making matters worse is a 2016 Alaska law that automatically registers residents to vote when they submit an application for the state's permanent fund dividend.

If you want to make an election less secure, you pair bloated voter rolls with mass mail-in voting and then strip all safeguards and verification requirements from the mail-in ballots, which is exactly what Alaska has done.

The state government's weak excuse for conducting a statewide mail-in election is that, because a special election must be held within 90 days of the vacancy (in this case, Young's death on March 18) there simply wasn't time to hire and train the 3,000 poll workers a standard in-person election would require. But even if you buy that, the state has not yet explained why it decided to conduct the mail-in election without any mechanism to verify the authenticity of the signatures on the

ballots.

On top of all this, the special primary election next month and the special general election in August will be the first election cycle in Alaska that employs ranked-choice voting, which voters approved in 2020.

It's hard to imagine an election scenario more ill-suited to such a convoluted and confusing scheme than this special election, partly because voters will be choosing among an unheard of 48 candidates in the special mail-in primary election and partly because the special in-person general election will take place on the same day — *and perhaps even on the same ballot* — as the regular primary. (The special election is to choose someone to serve out the remaining months of Young's current term, the regular general election is to choose the state's next at-large congressman.)

As Sarah Montalbano of the Alaska Policy Forum [noted recently](#) in the Alaska Watchman, that means "the bifurcated ballot will have both a special election chosen by [ranked-choice voting] and a general primary election instructing voters to choose only one!"

Montalbano calls Alaska's special election a "perfect storm," and for anyone concerned about election integrity and fairness, it certainly is a perfect storm. But for anyone who wants to make elections as unsecure and as open to fraud as possible, what's about to happen in Alaska is ideal.

It represents the institutionalization of the extraordinary changes to absentee voting in some states during the 2020 presidential election amid fears of in-person voting amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Those

changes, which got rid of nearly every safeguard for mail-in voting, were supposed to be temporary, necessitated by the pandemic.

But the left never lets a crisis go to waste, which is why we're about to see in Alaska's special election a dry-run for what Democrats would like to do nationwide: use every trick in the book to make our elections less secure.

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