



CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE

# Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## What is Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM)?

For the November 3, 2020 General Election, any voter can request to use Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM). RAVBM systems will allow voters with disabilities, many of whom often rely on others to assist them in reading and marking their ballot to cast their vote privately and independently from home. This IS NOT internet voting.

## How many RAVBM systems are there in California?

Currently, the California Secretary of State has conditionally approved four systems, Democracy Live Secure Select 1.2.2, Five Cedars Group Alternate Format Ballot (AFB) v5.2.1, Dominion ImageCast Remote 5.10A and Los Angeles County Voting Solution for All People Interactive Sample Ballot 2.5.

## How do RAVBM systems work?

Generally, a RAVBM system gives a voter with a disability an opportunity to download a ballot, allowing them to read it and mark it using their own assistive technology device. At that point, the voter with a disability has to print out their selections and return them to the County Elections Office. Disability Rights California published a **video demonstration of a RAVBM system**.

## How would a voter with a disability return their selections to the County Elections Office?

Either mail it or drop it off at a polling place (or vote center) in the specially provided envelope you will receive from your County Elections Office and sign the envelope, which has specially punched holes to indicate where a person with a sight disability should sign.

## What are the requirements for receiving a RAVBM ballot?

A voter can request RAVBM on the Secretary of State's website by going to **My Voter Status** or by contacting their **County Elections Office**. A voter may request a Vote-by-Mail Ballot or a RAVBM up to and including Election Day. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Some counties allow voters with disabilities to use RAVBM by going directly to the portal from the County Elections Office's website without a formal request. Individual counties can modify their website as needed.

In some counties, a voter with a disability who would like to use the RAVBM system must have registered as a Vote-by-Mail voter. Voters in Voter's Choice Act counties do not have to request a Vote-by-Mail ballot as they will automatically be receiving a ballot with the return envelope. They must however, request RAVBM.

## How secure are RAVBM systems?

California has one of the most strenuous testing and certification programs in the country to ensure that your private and independent ballot is secure.

## Outreach Ideas for RAVBM:

There are many ways counties may successfully publicize this new accessible voting system.

- ✔ Have information about the RAVBM system, including information about how a voter with a disability can request to use it, and a video demonstration of the RAVBM system on the Elections Office Website.
- ✔ Through the County's Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC), including a demonstration of the RAVBM system at a VAAC meeting.
- ✔ Publish in the Sample Ballot/Voter Information Guide.
- ✔ Send information to all stakeholders and community-based organizations, for example: Department of Rehabilitation or all Independent Living Centers, California Council of the Blind or the National Foundation of the Blind to name just a couple.
- ✔ Encourage the stakeholders and community-based organizations to post the information, including the video demonstration, on their website.
- ✔ Provide demonstrations of how to use the RAVBM system at outreaches at disability-related organizations.



**For more information on Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM), please visit the Secretary of State's website at: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/remoteaccessible-vote-mail>.**



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