



How early mail-in voters having second thoughts can change their votes

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WASHINGTON (SBG) - Early mail-in voters who are having second thoughts about their choice can change their vote before Election Day in a select number of states, a constitutional scholar at a libertarian-leaning think tank says.

“For those who have gotten a ballot in the mail and have not sent it back yet, it’s easy pretty much everywhere. Most states you can walk in on election day,” says Walter Olson, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, “If you haven’t sent that ballot back, you don’t have to vote by mail.”

Voters who intended on voting through the mail system are not legally obligated to follow through with those plans. They can vote in person “almost anywhere,” said Olson, who was appointed in 2015 by Maryland Governor Larry Hogan as co-chair for a commission to redraw the boundaries of Western Maryland’s congressional district. He also runs Overlawyered, a website that focuses on tort reform and alleged overreaching by attorneys.

It’s more difficult for early mail-in voters to change their vote if they’ve already signed and sent in their ballots, according to Olson.

“If you are someone in that category, then there are only about five states that leave open the possibility for you to have voter’s regret, as it were and vote for someone different,” he said.

New York, Michigan, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, and Connecticut still allow early mail-in voters to change their vote up until a week before the election, Olson said before noting that the “clock is ticking” for those who are regretting their initial choice.

“New York is the most liberal one,” he added. “New York will let you come in on the morning of the election even though they have received your ballot and you have signed it. They will set it aside, spoil it, not count it, and you can vote in person instead.”

Michigan and Wisconsin are not as forgiving, according to Olson. “You can’t do it on Election Day. You have to do it by an earlier deadline, which is different for each state.”

Some election officials are urging people not to backtrack on their initial vote, as spoiled ballots add to the difficulties of running elections.