

# Ohio Mail Ballot Trends

November 2, 2020

The accompanying graphs document important trends related to absentee ballots in Ohio. The data were downloaded from the websites of the county board of elections within Ohio. Clermont, Hancock, Huron, Mercer, Morrow, Sandusky, Wayne, Stark, and Wyandot counties were excluded from the data due to either lack of data availability or data quality issues. Early in-person voters, in-office absentee voters, and absentee ballot requests that were rejected were also excluded from the data. Voter registration in Ohio closed on October 5<sup>th</sup> and absentee ballots were first sent out on October 6<sup>th</sup>. The deadline for registered voters to request a ballot by mail in Ohio is October 31<sup>st</sup>. *Request data* are based on cumulative absentee ballot registration information provided by individual county board of elections in Ohio. *Return data* are available either within absentee ballot registration datasets or in daily reports of returned mail ballots. *Ballots outstanding* are calculated by subtracting returned from requested ballots for the relevant time periods.

Note that these statistics pertain to individual ballot requests and returns. A small number of voters may have more than one request or return, because of problems encountered with the ballots. (For instance, if a voter “spoils” a ballot—that is, makes a mistake and asks for a new ballot—both the spoiled and replacement ballot will appear in the dataset.) We have not removed duplicates such as these. Therefore, there are slightly more requests reflected in this document than there are individuals who requested mail ballots. Due to the missing data issues at the county level, the number of requests and returns in this dataset are likely an undercount. However, as we include the major metropolitan areas of Ohio we expect the general trends to hold for Ohio. Data regarding race was imputed using Bayesian Improved Surname Geocoding (BISG) on the surname and ZIP code surname fields of the Ohio absentee voter files. [Elliot et al.](#) found that BISG is relatively accurate in imputing overall racial/ethnic prevalence and individual race/ethnicity.

As noted by the [U.S. Elections Project](#), in the Ohio ballot reports “Party” refers to party affiliation, which is the record of the last party primary a voter participated in within the last two calendar years. Therefore plots and statistics regarding absentee ballot requests and returns by party do not reflect party registration and should not be interpreted as such. In the above link the U.S. Elections Project also reports that for Ohio’s April 28, 2020 presidential primary, 124,628 more voters participated in the Democratic primary than Republican primary. This has lead party affiliation in Ohio absentee ballot reports skewing more towards Democrats for the 2020 Presidential General Election.

Each week runs from Sunday to Saturday. The data on the x-axis is the Sunday that begins the week.

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## Of Note this Week

- As of last week, over 2.2 million mail-in ballots have been requested. In all of 2016, a total of 1.29 million mail ballots were requested.
- Over 500,000 mail-in ballots were returned during the week of October 25<sup>th</sup> and nearly 2 million mail-in ballots have been returned cumulatively. Just over 10% of requested ballots have yet to be returned.
- Mail-in ballot requests and returns appear to be led by White voters with around 76% of ballots requested coming from White voters. Of returned ballots, White voters account for around 77% of the cumulative returns while Black voters account for around 13% of cumulative returns and voters of other races have account for around 11% of cumulative returns.
- For the week of October 25<sup>th</sup>, around 74% of mail-in ballot requests were made by unaffiliated or third-party affiliated voters. Since the week of October 18<sup>th</sup>, total weekly ballot requests by

unaffiliated or third-party affiliated voters have steadily increased while total weekly ballot requests by Democratic affiliated or Republican affiliated voters have decreased.

- Cumulatively, Democratic affiliated voters have made 30.6% of mail-in ballot requests, Republican affiliated voters have made around 16.4% of mail-in ballot requests, and voters with other or no party affiliation have made around 53% of mail-in ballot requests.
- Democratic affiliated voters have returned nearly 96% of requested mail-in ballots while Republican affiliated voters have returned nearly 94% of requested mail-in ballots. Around 15% of requested mail-in ballots from voters with other or no party affiliation are yet to be returned.

## General trends

### For the week of October 25:

- 117,381 mail ballots were requested. This brings the total number requested to 2,218,844.
  - 89.88% of all requested ballots have been returned for counting.
- 502,712 mail ballots were returned. This bring the total number returned to 1,994,294.
- 224,550 mail ballots are still outstanding.

### By race

For the week of October 25,

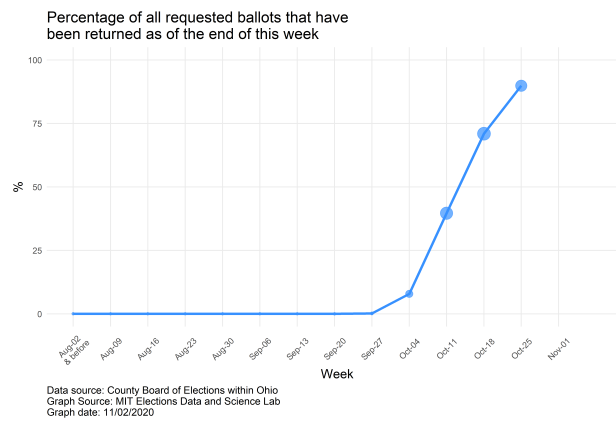
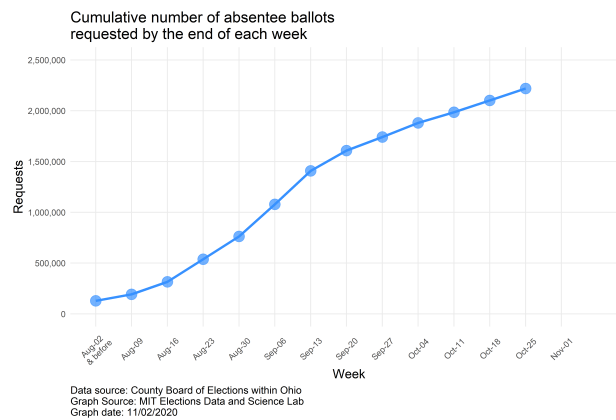
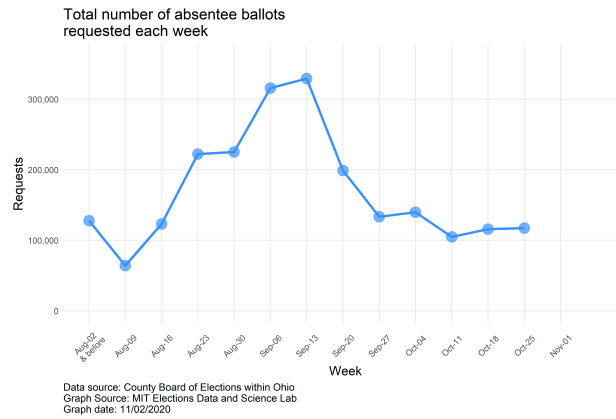
- The breakdown of requests by race for the week was White 80,522.11, Black 21,988.63, and other race 14,870.26. Cumulatively, the breakdown of requests is White 1,688,941, Black 290,766.7, and other race 239,136.4.
  - For the week, 68.6% of requested ballots came from White voters, 18.73% from Black voters, and 12.67% from voters of other races. Cumulatively, 76.12% of requests have come from White voters, 13.1% from Black voters, and 10.78% from voters of other races.
- The breakdown of mail ballots returned by race for the week was White 372,593.5, Black 70,156.85, and other race 59,961.66. Cumulatively, the breakdown of returns is white 1,527,376, Black 255,308.5 and other race 211,610.
  - For the week, 74.12% of ballots were returned by White voters, 13.96% from Black voters, and 11.93% from voters of other races. Cumulatively, 76.59% of mail ballots returned have been from White voters, 12.8% from Black voters, and 10.61% from voters of other races.
  - Thus far, 90.43% of ballots requested by White voters have been returned, compared to 87.81% of ballots requested by Black voters and 88.49% of ballots requested by voters of other races.
- The breakdown of mail ballots still outstanding was White 161,565.3, Black 35,458.21, and other race 27,526.44.

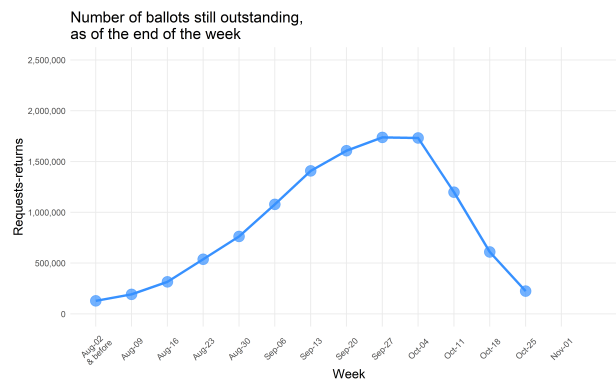
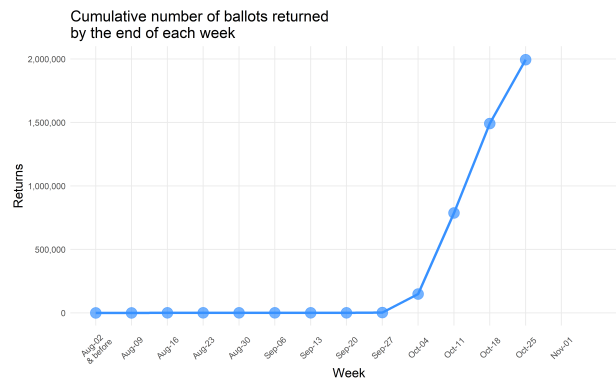
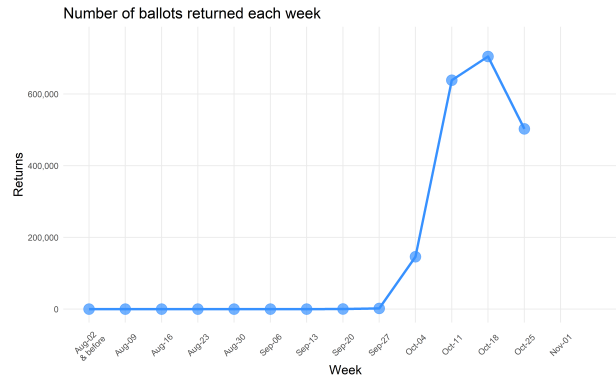
## By party affiliation

For the week of October 25,

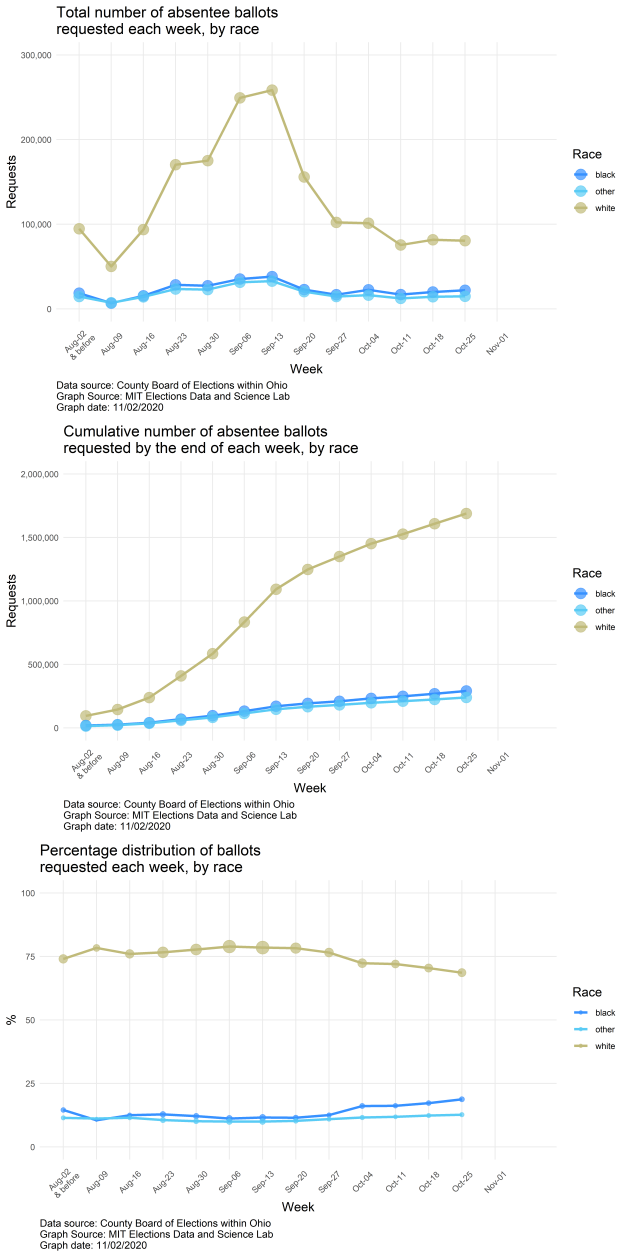
- The breakdown of requests by party affiliation for the week was Democrat 18,749, Republican 11,378, and other or no party affiliation 87,254. Cumulatively, the breakdown of requests is Democrats 679,032, Republican 363,952, and other or no party affiliation 1,175,860
  - For the week, 15.97% of requests came from Democrats, 9.69% from Republicans, and 74.33% from voters of other or no party affiliation. Cumulatively, 30.6% of requests have come from Democrats, 16.4% from Republicans, and 52.99% from voters of other or no party affiliation.
- The breakdown of mail ballots returned by party for the week was Democrat 105,636, Republican 69,126, and other or no party affiliation 327,950. Cumulatively, the breakdown of returned ballots is Democrat 652,938, Republican 343,428 and other or no party affiliation 997,928.
  - For the week, 21.01% of ballots were returned by Democrats, 13.75% from Republicans, and 65.24% from voters of other or no party affiliation. Cumulatively, 32.74% of mail ballots returned have been from Democrats, 17.22% from Republicans, and 50.04% from voters of other or no party affiliation.
  - Thus far, 96.16% of ballots requested by Democrats have been returned, compared to 94.36% of ballots requested by Republicans and 84.87% of ballots requested by voters of other or no party affiliation.
- The breakdown of mail ballots still outstanding was Democrat 26,094, Republican 20,524, and other or no party affiliation 177,932.

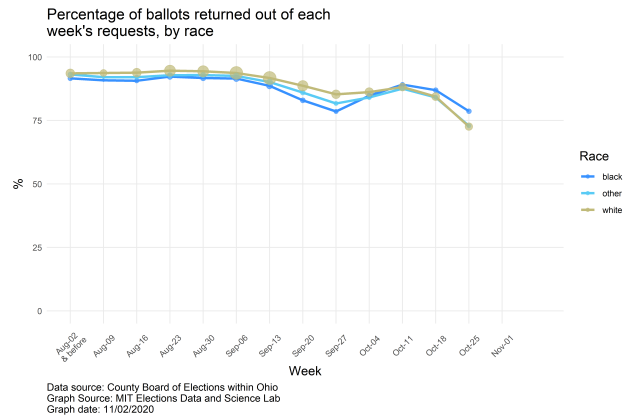
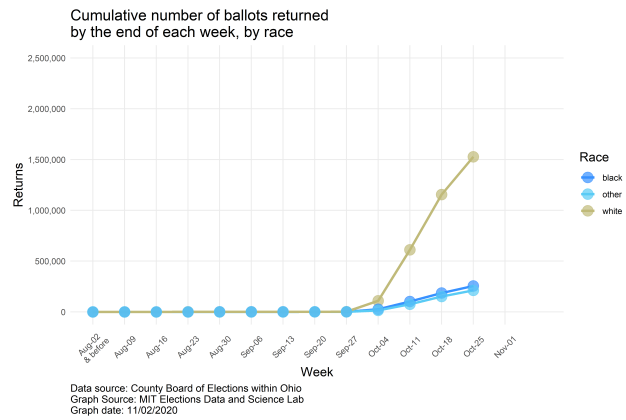
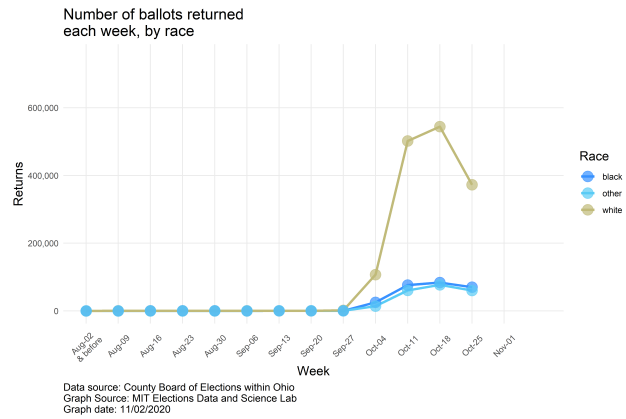
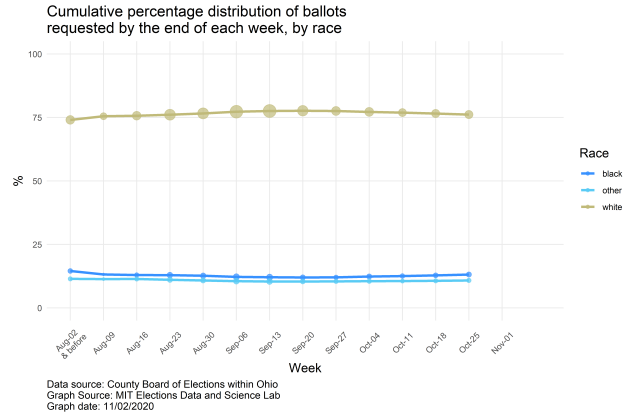
# Appendix 1: Aggregate Ballot Request and Return Trends



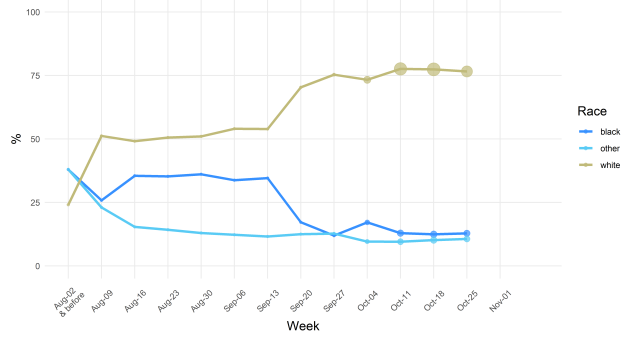


# Appendix 2: Ballot Request and Return Trends by Race

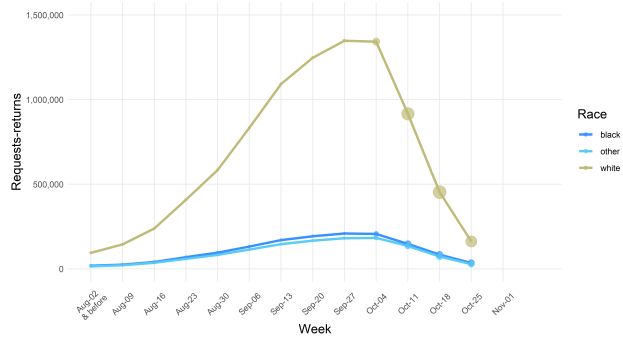




Cumulative percentage of ballots returned by the end of each week, by race

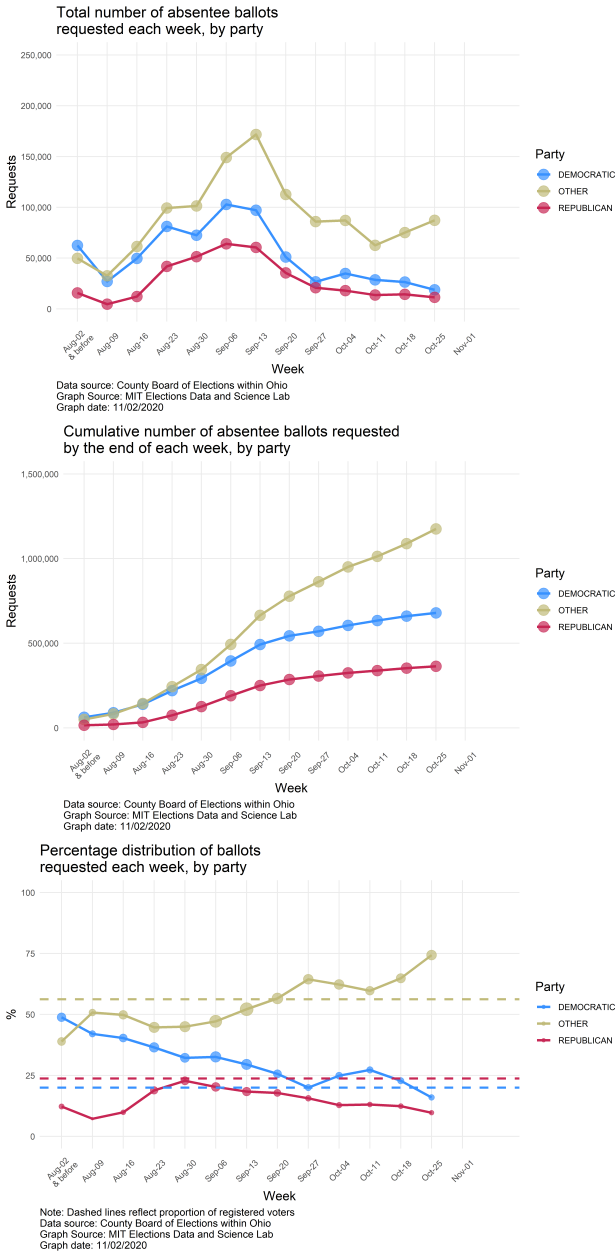


Number of ballots still outstanding, as of the end of the week, by race

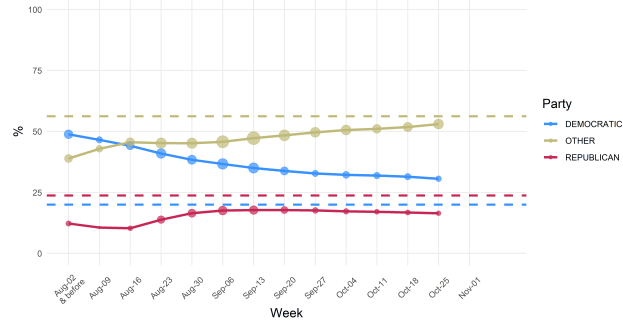




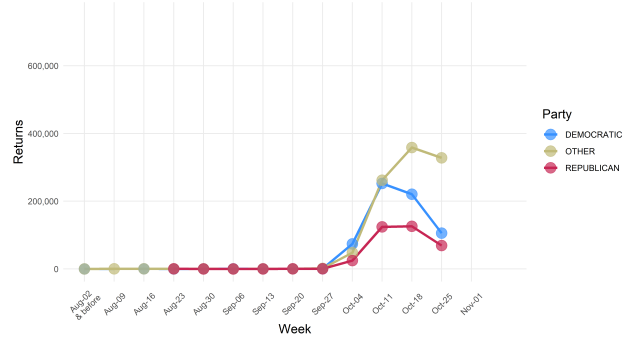
# Appendix 3: Ballot request and return trends by party affiliation



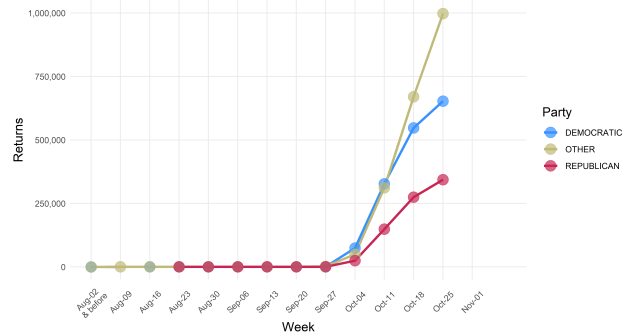
Cumulative percentage distribution of ballots requested by the end of each week, by party



Number of ballots returned each week, by party



Cumulative number of ballots returned by the end of each week, by party



Percentage of ballots returned out of each week's requests, by party

