

# Ballot tracking proposal advancing with bipartisan support in state legislature

Written by Cache Valley Daily

February 7, 2021

<https://www.stgeorgeutah.com/news/archive/2021/02/07/cvd-igl21-ballot-tracking-proposal-advancing-with-bipartisan-support-is-state-legislature/#.YCFyV-hKiUk>

SALT LAKE CITY — If there's one issue about which Utah Republicans and Democrats can agree, it's apparently election integrity.

Early voting gets underway at the Dixie Convention Center in St. George, Utah, Oct. 28, 2020 | Photo by St. George News

State Rep. Dan Johnson, R-District 4, has crafted such a proverbial legislative miracle addressing that issue in HB 70 Ballot Tracking Amendments, which sailed through the Utah House last week with unanimous bipartisan support.

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"I don't think that there's anything more important in a republic than people being able to trust the voting process," the lawmaker said during a virtual town hall Thursday sponsored by Cache Valley Republicans. "If they can't, that doesn't feel good to me. "

If enacted, the "ballot tracking" law proposed by Johnson will allow Utah voters to digitally track their mail-in ballots throughout the election process and to correct any problems that might arise in the counting of their ballots.

The provisions of the proposed law would allow voters, starting in the 2022 federal midterm election, to choose to receive either text messages or e-mail notifications regarding the status of their ballots.

To do that, the office of Lt. Gov. Deidre Henderson would be required to create an online system that "tracks all ballots that are mailed or deposited in drop-boxes" and maintain a website that allows voters to check the status of their ballots and make technical or conforming changes as necessary.

With bipartisan sponsorship, Johnson's bill was passed by the members of the Utah House by a 72-0 margin and sent to the Utah Senate for review.

State Rep. Dan Johnson in undated photo from 2020. | Photo courtesy of Utah State Legislature, St. George News

The state of Utah used a combination of widespread mail-in ballots and in-person voting to achieve record voter turnout during the 2020 general election.

But questionable mail-in balloting rules in some battleground states were the focus of former President Donald Trump's allegations of voter fraud in that election.

While Utah Rep. Casey Snider calls the 2020 general election polling “the fairest election in our state, ever,” he still believes that even tighter voting contests are possible with the adoption of Johnson’s ballot tracking proposals.

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“I worked with former Rep. Ed Redd on this bill,” Johnson admitted. “But the original idea for this proposal was stirring in the mind of our new Cache County clerk, Jess Bradfield.”

Bradfield emphasizes that the ability for a voter to track his or her ballot throughout the election process – from the time that a ballot leaves the printer, is completed by the voter, then received by the county clerk and finally counted – will help to address concerns about the integrity of mail-in balloting.

The Cache County clerk explained that his office functioned as a liaison to the Utah Clerks Association (UCA) and stayed in touch with the lieutenant governor’s office during the drafting of Johnson’s bill. As a result, the UCA and Henderson voiced support for HB 70 during the House debate on the proposal.

Bradfield added that Johnson’s bill is also supported by the Utah branch of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

“We have a lot of good people in Utah with good ideas about this (voter integrity) problem,” Johnson said. “I’m just helping them out.”

Written by CHARLIE SCHILL, Cache Valley Daily