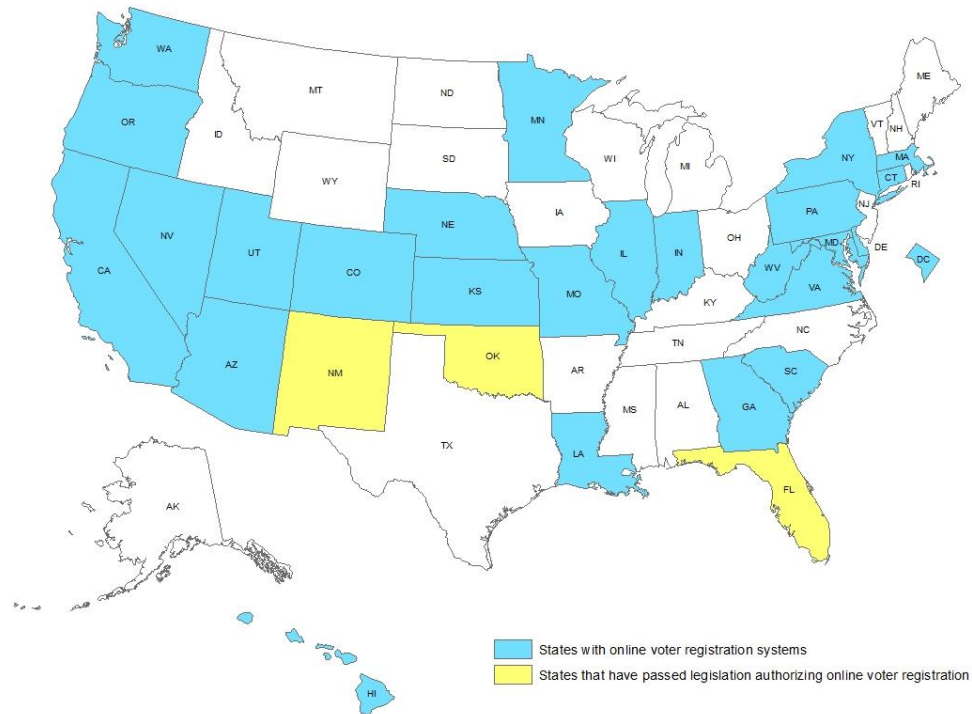


**Online voter registration** is a secure and efficient method to get eligible citizens onto state voter rolls. Over the past decade, online registration has been embraced by voters for its convenience and championed by state officials for improving data accuracy while reducing administrative costs.

Moving the registration process online is a smart allocation of resources and technology that has been adopted across the country, in states both geographically and politically diverse.



## IMPROVED ACCURACY

Electronic registration minimizes inaccurate records that arise from processing handwritten paper forms, such as:

- Data entry errors
- Sloppy handwriting
- Incomplete application forms

## INCREASED INTEGRITY

Compared to paper registration, each online applicant goes through **additional identity verification**. With improved data accuracy in voter records, **potential for fraud will decrease**, and, by giving voters a direct avenue to update their information rather than relying upon third party registration drives, online registration **protects voter privacy**.

## COST SAVINGS

Going online will reduce reliance on the primary cost-drivers of voter registration systems: **paper, printing, postage, and manual data entry**.

### *Online v. Paper*

- In Maricopa County, Arizona, home to Phoenix, each paper registration cost, on average, \$0.83 to process, while each electronic registration cost only \$0.03.
- Washington State election officials calculated that the state and counties save between \$0.50 and \$2.00 per electronic voter registration.

- Colorado conducted a study demonstrating a drop in processing costs from \$1.06 per paper registration to just \$.35 for an online registration, with most savings felt at the county level.
- California calculated that each voter registration application received electronically saves the state \$2.34 compared to what the state would have paid if that application was received on paper.

### **ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION IS SECURE**

Online voter registration systems can be built with stringent technical security measures from the onset to prevent potential cyber-attacks. **No state with online voter registration reports fraudulent activity or security breaches** occurring through their systems. This includes the three states with the longest histories of online voter registration – Arizona (over a decade), Washington (in its eighth year), and Kansas (in its seventh year).

### **BOTH MAJOR PARTIES SUPPORT ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION**

The move to online voter registration began in a Republican state, Arizona, and has been embraced by both red and blue-leaning states. The politically diverse list of states includes Kansas, Indiana, Utah, Oregon, Maryland, and California.

#### **ARIZONA**

In Maricopa County (Phoenix) in 2010, 25 percent of new online applicants were Republican, compared to 19 percent Democratic.

#### **UTAH**

Republicans accounted for 48.5 percent of voter registrations received online in 2012, compared to 36.5 percent for Independents and 13.2 percent for Democrats.

#### **MARYLAND**

Online registration in 2012 was slightly more Republican, at 20.1 percent, than traditional paper registration, at 16.7 percent.

#### **CALIFORNIA**

About 47 percent of online registrants in 2012 were Democratic, while about 20 percent were Republicans, and about 18 percent were unaffiliated with a party.

### **VOTERS PREFER ONLINE REGISTRATION**

When provided the opportunity to register online, voters have embraced the technology:

- In Arizona, 70 percent of all voter registration activity was conducted electronically in 2012;
- South Carolina was only able to offer online registration for five days prior to the registration deadline before the 2012 election, yet the state saw nearly 17,000 new registrations and an additional 8,000 updates to existing registrations in that short time period;
- Over a million Californians used the state's new online registration system during the month it was live before the registration deadline in 2012; over half of all new registrations received by the state during that final month of registration activity were submitted online.

Allowing eligible voters the opportunity to register online will improve the accuracy, efficiency and cost of the voter registration process. While the traditional method of paper registration remains available, voters are given an additional streamlined and secure option to register electronically, and state officials receive an efficient and cost-effective tool to improve the accuracy and integrity of their lists, while reducing administrative costs and potential problems at the polls.

For further information on online voter registration and other strategies to upgrade state voter registration systems, you can contact David Becker, Director of Pew's Election Initiatives at [dbecker@pewtrusts.org](mailto:dbecker@pewtrusts.org), or go to our website at [www.pewstates.org/voterreg](http://www.pewstates.org/voterreg).