

# PUBLIC INTEREST

— LEGAL FOUNDATION —

## 28.3M Mail Ballots Went Missing from 2012 - 2018 Elections

Even in times of relative tranquility and health, the U.S. mail voting system generates millions of errors and even more questions about what actually happens after an official puts a ballot in the postal system. Expansion and automation will effectively guarantee even greater figures depicting failure and confusion during one of the most historic challenges facing the nation. Elections in 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018 saw more than 28.3 million “unaccounted for” mail ballots.

### 2016 Election

-41.6 million ballots sent  
-568,412 undeliverable  
-318,716 rejected  
-5,951,992 “unknown”

### 2018 Election

-42.4 million ballots sent  
-543,936 undeliverable  
-430,108 rejected  
-10,475,573 “unknown”

2018 Election – “Unknown” Ballots	
Location	Count
Los Angeles County, CA	1,377,435
Maricopa County, AZ	407,816
Orange County, CA	374,264
King County, WA	352,624
San Diego County, CA	334,912
Sacramento County, CA	324,312
Riverside County, CA	273,458
San Bernardino County, CA	242,870
Alameda County, CA	226,761
Santa Clara County, CA	208,037

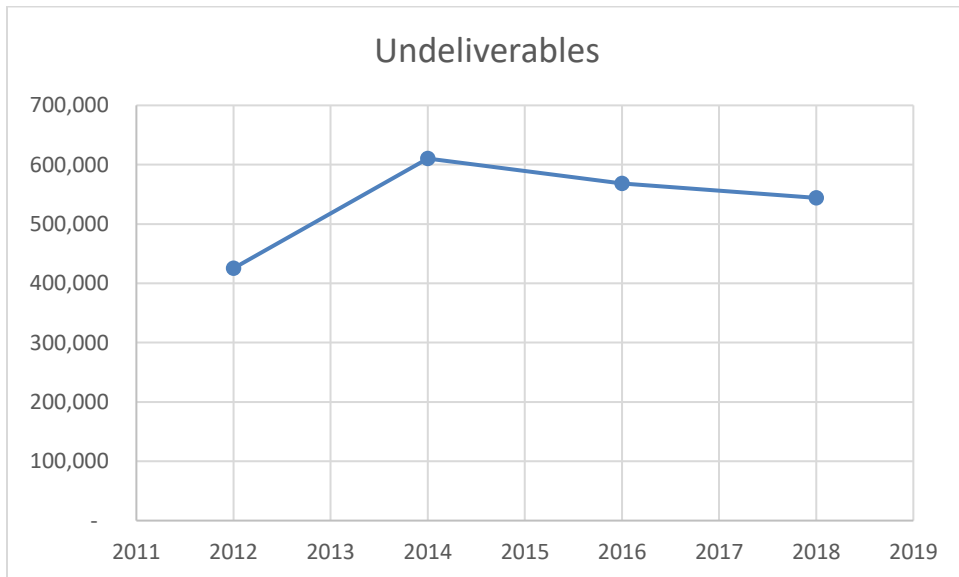
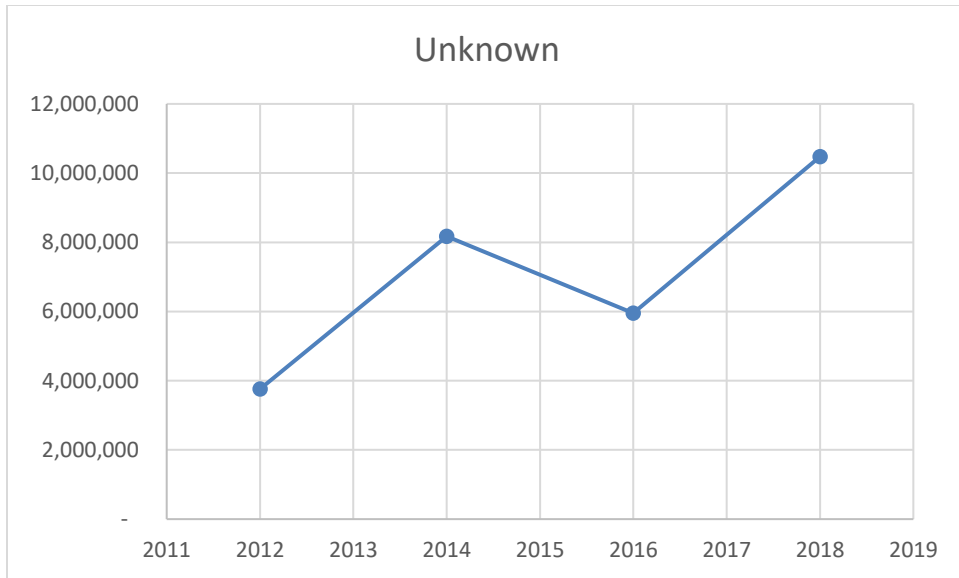
2018 Election – Undeliverable Ballots	
Location	Total
Maricopa County, AZ	87,045
San Diego County, CA	69,770
Orange County, CA	34,257
Santa Clara County, CA	22,589
Riverside County, CA	17,291
King County, WA	13,338
Multnomah County, OR	13,122
Hillsborough County, FL	11,618
Clark County, WA	9,427
Kern County, CA	8,505

### A Look Back at the 2008 Election

In 2008, 3,900,000 requested ballots never arrived at their intended address targets. Another 2,900,000 ballots never made their way back to the election office. Roughly 1,000,000 ballots were rejected outright, typically due to signature match errors.

### PILF President J. Christian Adams

*“Putting the election in the hands of the United States Postal Service would be a catastrophe. Over the recent decade, there were 28 million missing and misdirected ballots. These represent 28 million opportunities for someone to cheat. Absentee ballot fraud is the most common; the most expensive to investigate; and can never be reversed after an election. The status quo was already bad for mail balloting. The proposed emergency fix is worse.”*



**Sources**

*U.S. Election Assistance Commission; Election Administration and Voting Surveys for 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018*

*The Washington Post; More voting by mail would make the 2020 election safer for our health. But it comes with risks of its own. (April 6, 2020)*