



Church Ballot Collection Project: The Ballots Are Ripe for the Harvest...
March 14, 2026 • Networking the Networks • Faith & Fire

Summary of IL Ballot Harvesting

Compiled sources: Claude.ai by Anthropic, reviewed by ICU paralegal, final review by John Fogarty, Jr., Attorney

Information cited and reviewed September 23, 2025

DISCLAIMER: This presenter is not an attorney. This presentation should not be construed as legal advice. This presentation is for general informational purposes only. We recommend consulting with a qualified attorney tailored to your specific situation. (March 14, 2026).

Key findings:

- Illinois law allows "any person authorized by the voter" to collect and deliver ballots
- There are no limits on the number of ballots one person can collect
- Special provisions exist for voters in hospitals or care facilities, where staff can collect ballots and **mail** them in.

NOTE: They cannot harvest (collect) them and take them in unless the voter gives specific authorization to a specific person/entity. If a person has been in a facility not more than 14 days there is a whole procedure that must be followed including an Attending Health Care professional statement.

- All ballot collection requires written authorization using a specific form
- The primary legal authority comes from 10 ILCS 5/19-6

The following summary explains who can legally collect ballots, the required procedures (including the authorization form), what activities are prohibited, and how ballots can be returned to election authorities. We were unable to find specific JCAR regulations that add additional rules beyond the statutory requirements in the Illinois Election Code.

Illinois has relatively permissive ballot collection laws compared to many other states, with the main requirement being written voter authorization rather than restrictions on who can collect or limits on the number of ballots.

Illinois Ballot Collection Laws Summary

What is Ballot Collection?

Ballot collection (sometimes called "ballot harvesting") is when someone other than the voter takes a completed ballot and delivers it to the election office. In Illinois, there are specific rules about who can do this and how it must be done.

Who Can Collect Ballots in Illinois?

Regular Voters

According to 10 ILCS 5/19-6, any person that the voter gives permission to can collect and deliver their ballot. This means:

- Anyone the voter chooses can collect their ballot
- The voter must give written permission using a special form
- There is **no limit** on how many ballots one person can collect

Special Cases for Voters Who Need Help

Voters in Hospitals or Care Facilities

If a *voter is in a hospital or care facility, any employee or person working at that facility can collect and **mail** the voter's ballot (not harvest or collect and deliver) This includes:

- Hospital staff members
- Nursing home employees
- Workers at assisted living facilities

*NOTE: different rules for someone who has been in a facility 14 days or less. See Section 19-3

Voters with Physical Disabilities

For voters who cannot physically handle their ballot due to disabilities, facility staff can help collect and mail their ballots.

Professional Delivery Companies

Licensed motor carrier companies (professional delivery services) that are approved by the Illinois Commerce Commission can also collect and deliver ballots. This company would have to have been give written permission just like an individual.

How Must Ballot Collection Be Done?

Written Permission Required

When someone other than the voter delivers a ballot, both the voter and the person helping must fill out an authorization form that comes with the ballot envelope. This form must include:

- The voter's signature and date
- The printed name of the person who will deliver the ballot
- The signature of the person delivering the ballot
- The date the ballot was delivered to the election office

What the Authorization Form Says

The form printed on the ballot envelope states: "I (voter) authorize to take the necessary steps to have this ballot delivered promptly to the office of the election authority."

What is Against the Law?

Unauthorized Collection

It is illegal for anyone to take a voter's ballot without the voter's permission, except for the special cases mentioned above (hospital staff for hospitalized voters, etc.).

No Limits on Number of Ballots

Unlike some other states, Illinois law does not set a maximum number of ballots that one person can collect. As long as each voter gives written permission, one person could theoretically collect hundreds of ballots.

How Ballots Can Be Returned

By Mail

- Voters can mail their own ballots
- Election authorities must accept vote-by-mail ballots even if they don't have enough postage or no postage at all

Drop-off Locations

- Election authorities may set up secure collection sites where voters can drop off ballots without postage
- These sites must be locked and only election officials can open them
- Ballots are collected daily, and any ballots dropped off after business hours are counted as received the next day (except on election day)

In-Person Delivery

- Voters can deliver their own ballots to the election office
- Authorized people can deliver ballots for voters (with written permission)

Legal Citations

All of these rules come from **10 ILCS 5/19-6** (Section 19-6 of the Illinois Election Code). This law was last updated by:

- Public Act 102-1 (effective April 2, 2021)
- Public Act 102-668 (effective November 15, 2021)

JCAR Regulations

Based on available information, there do not appear to be specific JCAR (Joint Committee on Administrative Rules) regulations that add additional rules beyond what is in the Illinois Election Code for ballot collection. The Illinois State Board of Elections does have authority to create additional security guidelines for ballot collection sites, but these would be internal guidelines rather than formal JCAR regulations.

Summary

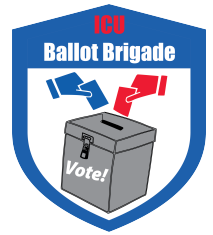
In simple terms, Illinois has relatively permissive ballot collection laws compared to other states:

- Almost anyone can collect ballots if the voter gives written permission
- There's no limit on how many ballots one person can collect
- Special rules exist to help voters in hospitals and care facilities
- Both the voter and collector must sign authorization forms
- It's illegal to collect ballots without permission

The main law governing this is found in **10 ILCS 5/19-6** of the Illinois Election Code.



Ballot Brigade Program
a project of Illinois Conservative Union
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To download the slides and handouts from today's presentation

Illinois Conservative Union: Illinois Election Integrity Program website: <https://www.ieip.org>

To download these handouts with live links: <https://www.ieip.org/guardians-education-links/>

Ballotpedia bills itself as the encyclopedia of American politics.

https://ballotpedia.org/Main_Page

https://ballotpedia.org/Ballot_collection_laws_by_state

iVoterGuide, a project of the American Family Association a resource for faith-based voters. Debbie Wuthnow, the president of iVoterGuide and vice president of AFA Action, described the resource as a "one-stop shop for information regarding the election."

<https://ivoterguide.com/>

Articles cited regarding the success of the Calvary Chapel Chino Hills Ballot Collection Program

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/megachurch-collected-nearly-20k-ballots-in-last-2-elections.html>

<https://mycharisma.com/culture/california-megachurch-boosts-christian-voter-turnout-nationwide-for-2024/>

<https://www.cal-catholic.com/calvary-chapel-chino-hills-collects-20000-ballots/>

Public Interest Legal Foundation (PILF) counter showing how many elections were tied or lost by one vote. <https://publicinterestlegal.org/tied-elections/>

How to locate Election Authorities (EA) throughout Illinois Your church may serve more than one county or election jurisdiction, so in your planning you'll need to make provisions for collected ballots to be delivered to the appropriate EA.

<https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/ElectionAuthorities.aspx>

Monitoring & Acting on Legislation

In Illinois, people can file Witness Slips in Support or Opposition to legislation: <https://www.ilga.gov/>

Church Under False Attack for Their Ballot Collection Project

Original “attack article” against Calvary Chapel Red Bluff by SFGate:

<https://www.sfgate.com/northcoast/article/norcal-church-ballot-collection-tehama-19901332.php>

Another article which points out that the investigation was driven by a biased leftwing reporter & publication:

<https://capitalisminstitute.org/media-outlets-ballot-collection-claims-against-california-church-dismissed-by-officials/>

Cleared of wrongdoing:

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/california-church-cleared-of-wrongdoing-afte-collecting-ballots.html>

RESOURCES TO BUILD YOUR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MINISTRY

Real Impact (originated at Calvary Chapel Chino Hills, CA)

Gina Gleason, Executive Director

909-393-7100

www.realimpact.us

gina@realimpact.us

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Salt & Light Counsel

888-725-8654

www.saltandlightcouncil.org

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Biblical Voter (Connected to the Salt & Light Council)

<https://www.biblicalvoter.com/voter-registration-drive>

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My Faith Votes, a ministry of Million Voices

<https://www.myfaithvotes.org>

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Family Research Council – Online God and Government program video series plus workbooks:

<https://www.frc.org/godandgovernment#gsc.tab=0>

Family Research Council - Pray, Vote, Stand Chapters

<https://www.frc.org/chapters>

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