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[UM Big Sky Poll: Montanans Prefer to Cast Their Ballot by Mail This November](#)

MISSOULA – New research from the University of Montana’s Big Sky Poll found that the majority of Montanans would prefer to cast their ballot by mail this November.

Funded by the Headwaters Foundation, the poll found that 57% of respondents said they believe voting at a polling place November 2020 is safe, however, 66% prefer casting their ballot by mail. The poll also found:

- 53% of registered voters strongly believe their vote matters.
- 54% of Montanans believe Montana’s COVID-19 policies are “about right.”
- 51% would like to see a general election voter guide provided by the state.
- 48% would like a reminder providing information on where and when to vote.

Participants were split on how mail-in-ballots should be counted:

- 44% believe mail-in ballots should be counted if they are postmarked by Election Day.
- 47% believe ballots should be counted if they are received by the elections office before the close of polls.

“As Montana continues to navigate the implications of COVID-19, our results provide timely perspectives for state decision-makers to craft public policies in response to these times,” said Sara Rinfret, co-director of UM’s Big Sky Poll.

Rinfret is a professor and chair of UM's Max S. Baucus Institute and the Department of Public Administration and Policy. She and Justin Angle, associate professor of marketing in UM's College of Business, co-direct the poll, which provides applied learning opportunities at UM and is a fellowship opportunity for students in UM's Master of Public Administration, law and Master of Science in Business Analytics degree programs.

UM's Big Sky Poll recently concluded a [yearlong investigation of civic engagement across Montana](#), assessing how and why Montanans engage in public policy and what hampers those efforts. The poll asked 517 registered voters how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their public participation in the Big Sky state.

The UM Big Sky Poll was conducted online June 17 - 26, with 517 randomly selected registered Montana voters. The poll has a margin of error of +/- 4.31% points at a 95% confidence level. Survey results were weighted by geography, gender and education level to more accurately reflect demographics of the registered voter population in Montana.

Use of findings require attribution to the UM Big Sky Poll. Full results from this research are available on the UM Big Sky Poll website at <http://www.umt.edu/bigskypoll/>. More information on the Big Sky Poll is online at <http://www.umt.edu/bigskypoll/>.

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