

# What we know about the remaining vote count in Pennsylvania

By **Matt Rocheleau** Updated November 4, 2020, 5:39 p.m.



Workers prepared mail-in ballots for counting on Wednesday, Nov. 4, at the convention center in Lancaster, Penn. JULIO CORTEZ/ASSOCIATED PRESS

With more than 80 percent of the vote counted in Pennsylvania by mid-afternoon Wednesday, incumbent Republican President Donald Trump held a lead of about 400,000 votes, or six percentage points, over Democratic challenger Joe Biden.

At first blush, the picture may seem dire for former Vice President Biden in this critical battleground state, the biggest remaining electoral prize at 20 Electoral College votes.

But, a closer look at the data, shows there's still a lot of counting to be done — and the race may ultimately wind up being much tighter.

That's because the vast majority of the votes left to be counted are mail-in ballots, and mail-in votes counted so far have heavily favored Biden.

As of about 3:10 p.m. Wednesday, the [Pennsylvania Department of State](#), which oversees elections there, reported that more than 1.2 million of the nearly 1.6 million mail-in votes counted so far were for Biden, or about 78 percent.

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Trump, meanwhile, captured only about 341,000 of the mail-in votes counted so far, or about 21 percent.

The agency also [reported](#) a bit earlier, at about 2:35 p.m. Wednesday, that there were more than 1 million mail-in ballots still left to be counted.

If Biden continues to win mail-in votes at the same rate he has so far, he would add another 830,000 votes to his current total in Pennsylvania, or more than twice what he needs right now to surpass Trump.

If the pace continues, Trump would add another 228,000 votes to his total.

Of course, mail-in ballots are not the only ballots left. There are still several hundred thousand in-person votes to be counted, including in counties that heavily backed Trump in 2016 that have not yet reported any results, though many such counties have smaller populations. For a rough idea of what that could mean, Trump earned about 303,000 votes across those counties in 2016 compared to about 168,000 votes for his Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton.

So, all told, if current trends hold, Trump may have a little more than 500,000 votes left on his side, while Biden could have close to a million more headed his way — numbers that could narrow the current 400,000 gap between the two and make for a much tighter race.

These aren't the only factors in play. There are still mail-in ballots arriving, thanks to a recent Supreme Court ruling allowing ballots postmarked by Election Day to be accepted through Friday. And there's always the potential for legal challenges down the road, with Trump's campaign [already](#) saying it will sue to temporarily halt counting in Pennsylvania.

Elections are anyone's game until every vote is counted, but if the current and previous trends hold true, Pennsylvania could become a much more competitive race ahead.

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