

POST-ELECTION DAY TIMELINE

Follow this timeline to explore what can happen between this year's Election Day and Inauguration Day:ⁱ

NOV

NOVEMBER 3: Election Day

- Voting stops when polls close.
- Voters cast votes for electors.
- States begin counting votes.

DEC

LATE NOVEMBER/EARLY DECEMBER: Deadline to certify the election – varies by state

- You can follow key election-related litigation [here](#).

DECEMBER 8: "Safe Harbor Deadline"

- Date after which Congress cannot challenge any electors already named.
- States can still nominate electors after that point, but those new electors would still be subject to Congressional challenges.

DECEMBER 14: Electors Vote

- Electors convene in each state to cast ballots for president.
- If a state misses this deadline, then their electors would not count towards the vote for president.

DECEMBER 23: Deadline for states to get their electoral votes to Congress

JAN

JANUARY 3: New Congress is sworn in

JANUARY 6: Congress counts electoral votes and formally certifies a winner.

- Contingent Election: If no candidate receives a majority of electoral votes, the next steps are outlined in the [12th Amendment](#).
 - The House of Representative votes for the President.
 - Each state delegation has one vote.
 - 26 votes are necessary to win.
 - The Senate votes for the Vice President.

JANUARY 20: Presidential Inauguration

- New Presidential term begins by noon.
- If there is no president selected by January 20, an acting president is appointed in the meantime.
 - The acting president is based on the elected officials in office (e.g. If there is no President or VP, then the Speaker of House becomes Acting President; if there is no elected Speaker of the House then President Pro Tempore of the Senate becomes Acting President etc.).

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR STATES TO COUNT THEIR VOTES? ⁱⁱ

It is likely to take days or weeks to count all of the votes this year based on the counting process during the primary elections. With record number of mail-in votes, the general election could take just as long, if not longer, to complete counting.

- **23 states** voted in primaries after March 17, 2020, and many had increased mail-in voting substantially.
 - Took an average of 4 days to report.
 - Some states took more than 10 days to finish counting all votes.
 - Close races were not decided until over a month after votes were cast.
- **Battleground states** including, PA, WI, and GA were among the slowest states to report results. PA, WI, and MI do not allow election administrators to process mail-in ballots until Election Day.

[i] Riccardi, N. (2020, September 24). After the vote: A timeline of how a president takes power. The Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/after-the-vote-a-timeline-of-how-a-president-takes-power/2020/09/24/02533dc4-fea9-11ea-b0e4-350e4e60cc91_story.html

[ii] Still, A. & Schaul, K. (2020, September 17). Election night 2020 could go on for weeks – just look at the primaries. The Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/elections/how-long-election-results-2020/>