

Dots & Plots

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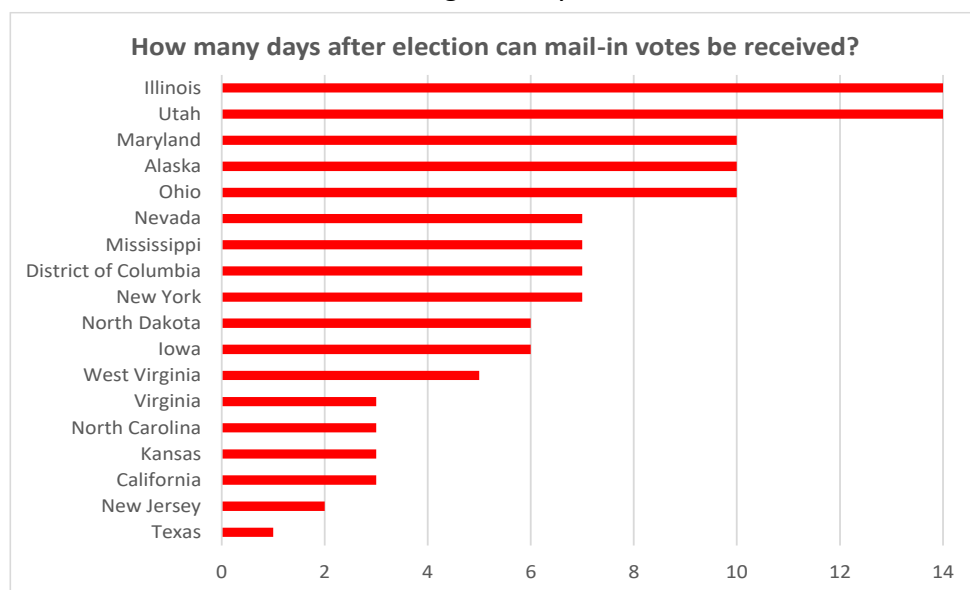
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You've Got Mail

Why US election results might be unknown for weeks

- November 3rd US Election Day is inching closer. Rather than the daytime drama that Asian trading floors are used to – as quick counts get tallied and major networks call for this state to be Red and that to be Blue, for a clear winner to be declared by the end of the day – things are about to get trickier.
- The pandemic is the ultimate culprit. As Americans fear catching the virus while lining up to vote at booths, demand for mail-in votes has surged. The state of the US postal service is so dire that it has readily admitted to it, issuing [letters of warning](#) to state officials to expect considerable delays.
- Given that a vast majority of states – 32 out of 50 – do not allow mail-in votes that arrive after Election Day to be counted as per current legislations, huge postal delays could mean that a lot of votes will be deemed void, putting the legitimacy of the whole democratic exercise in serious doubt.
- On the flip side, while it may appear to be a good thing then that 18 states and DC allow for some leeway, with Illinois and Utah counting votes that come in even two weeks after election, as long as they are postmarked before that, it also means that the final tally will not be known for weeks.
- It is all good if the initial results show a decisive landslide win one way or another. Given that it might well shape up to be a very close race, market might already be bracing for volatility ahead, as we had [mentioned before](#).
- The longest time that the world had to wait for US election results was 35 days, during the Bush vs. Gore “hanging chad” saga in 2000. This time round, the wait might well be longer and more replete with twists and turns. Also, the loser bowed out gracefully back then. We cannot assume the same now.



Source: OCBC, National Conference of State Legislatures. Note: The list above refers to those which allow mail-in votes to be counted even if they are received after election day. Washington state allows it too, but the deadline is unclear.

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