

Wisconsin Mail Ballot Trends

October 27, 2020

The accompanying graphs document important trends related to absentee ballots in Wisconsin. The data were downloaded from the website of the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC). *Request data* and *return data* are based on weekly reports supplied by the state. *Ballots outstanding* are calculated by subtracting returned from requested ballots for the relevant time periods. Race was imputed making use of Bayesian Inference with Surname and Geography (BISG) at the ZIP code level with the R *wru* package.

Note that these statistics pertain to individual ballot requests and returns. A small number of voters may have more than one request or return, because of problems encountered with the ballots. (For instance, if a voter “spoils” a ballot—that is, makes a mistake and asks for a new ballot—both the spoiled and replacement ballot will appear in the dataset.) We have not removed duplicates such as these. Therefore, there are slightly more requests reflected in this document than there are individuals who requested mail ballots.

Each week runs from Sunday to Saturday. The data on the x-axis is the Sunday that begins the week.

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Of Note this Week

- As of October 25, approximately 1,438,850 mail ballots have been requested. In comparison, 23,700 ballots had been requested for the 2016 general election at this time in 2016.
 - A total of 29,000 ballots were requested for the 2016 general election.
- Approximately 1,048,770 requested ballots have been returned. Ballot returns peaked in early October and have declined since.
- The number of mail ballots requested has remained constant at around 75,000 per week for the last three weeks.
- There are no substantial disparities between the rate at which voters of different races have returned their ballots. White voters, Black voters, and voters of other races have all returned roughly 70% of ballots requested.

General trends

For the week of October 18, 2020:

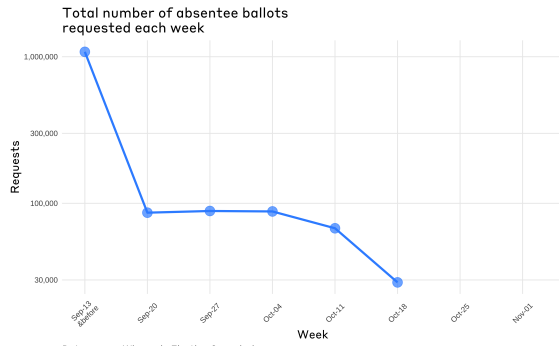
- 28,881 mail ballots were requested. This brings the total number requested to 1,438,850.
 - 72.89% of all requested ballots have been returned for counting.
- 179,530 mail ballots were returned. This brings the total number returned to 1,048,770.
- 390,080 mail ballots are still outstanding.

By race

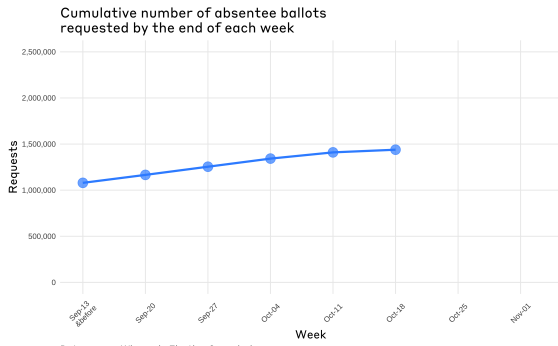
For the week of October 18, 2020,

- The breakdown of requests by race for the week was White (22,656), Black (2,278), and other (3,937). Cumulatively, the breakdown of requests is White (1,174,538), Black (95,769), and other (167,715).
- The breakdown of mail ballots returned by race for the week was White (145,612), Black (11,519), and other race (21,989). Cumulatively, the breakdown of returns is White (862,298), Black (64,976), and other race (116,465).
 - For the week, 21.31% of ballots requested by White voters were returned, 14.08% of ballots requested by Black voters were returned, and 12.84% of ballots requested by voters of other races were returned. Cumulatively, 73.42% of ballots requested by White voters have been returned, 67.85% of ballots requested by Black voters have been returned, and 69.44% of ballots requested by voters of other races have been returned.
- The breakdown of mail ballots still outstanding was White (312,240), Black (30,794), and other races (51,250).

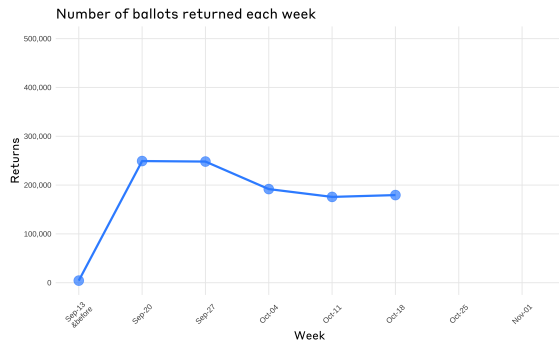
Appendix 1: Aggregate Ballot Request and Return Trends



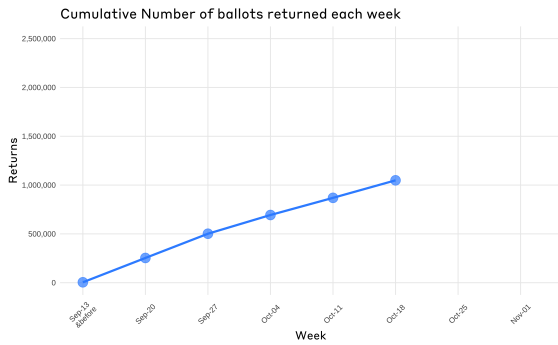
Data source: Wisconsin Election Commission
Graph Source: MIT Elections Data and Science Lab
Graph date: 10/27/2020



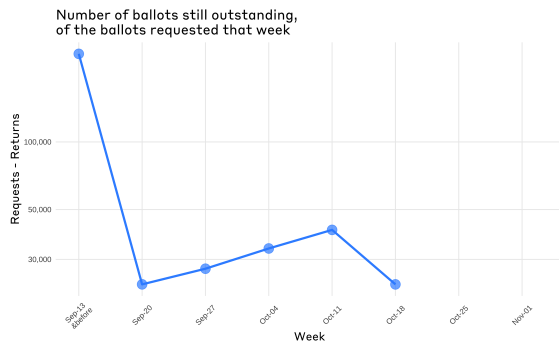
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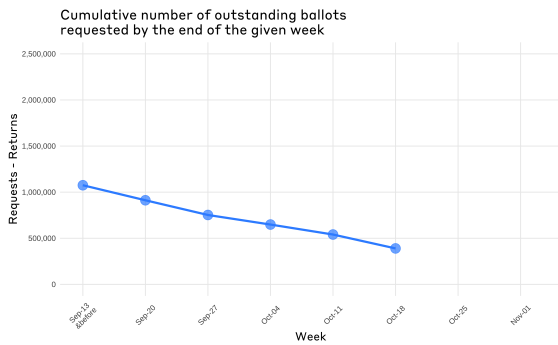
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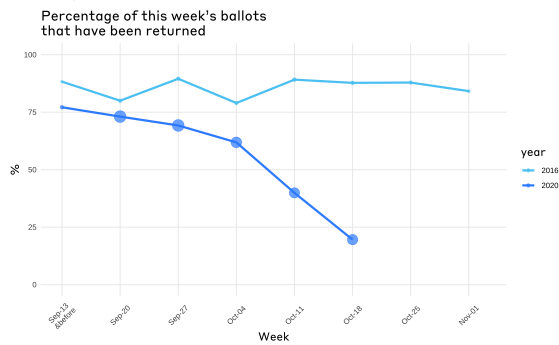
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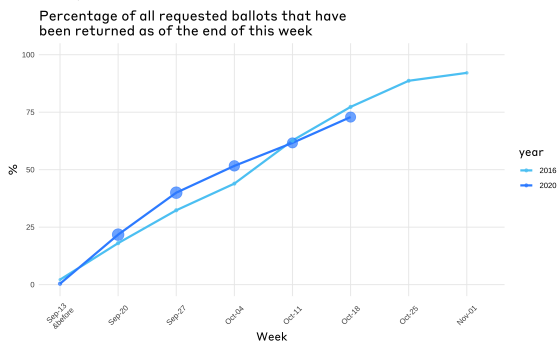
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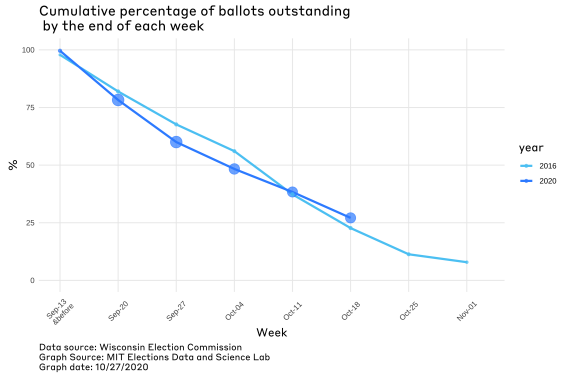
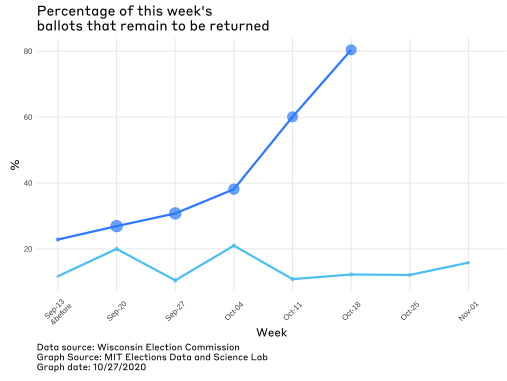
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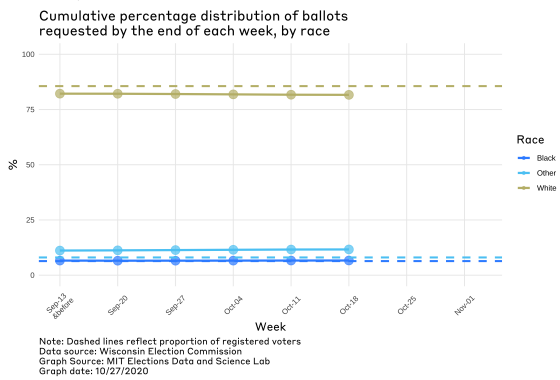
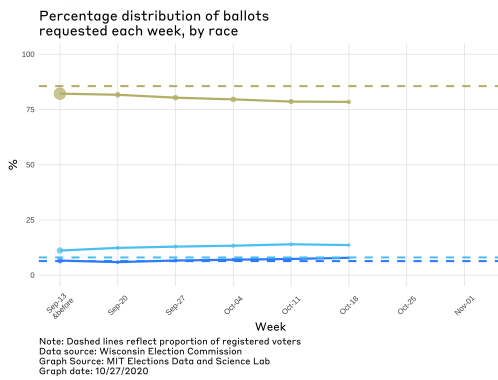
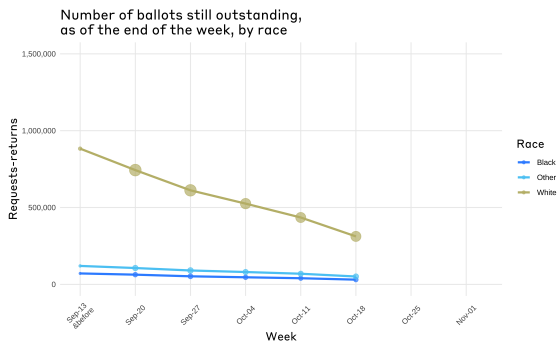
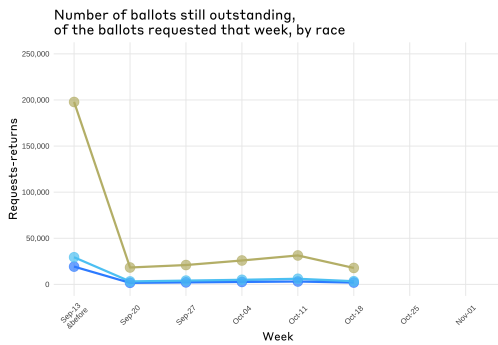
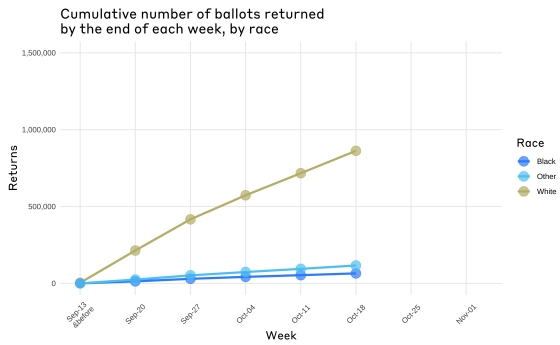
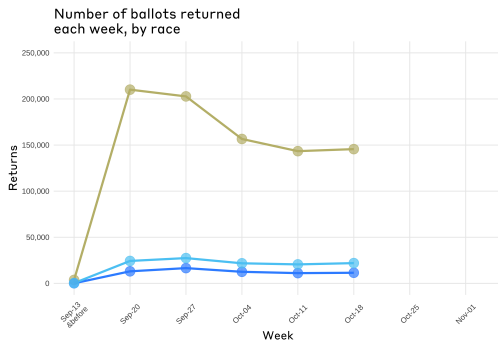
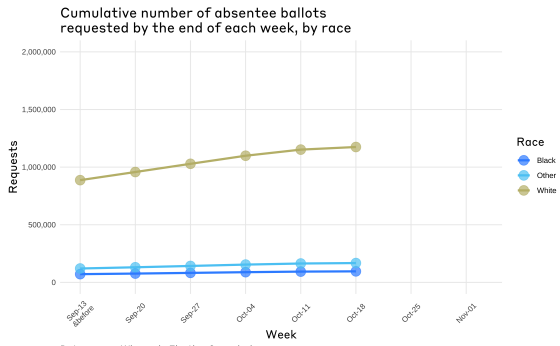
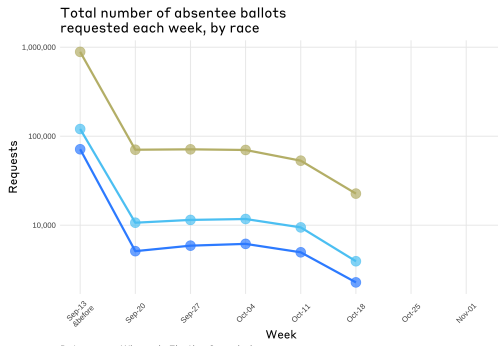
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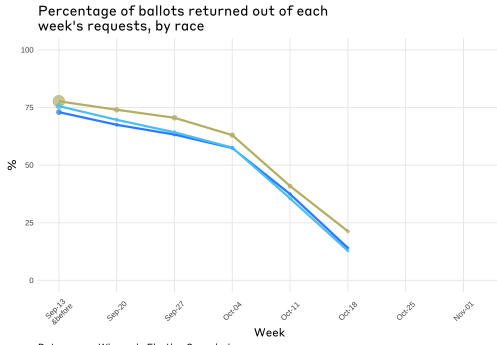


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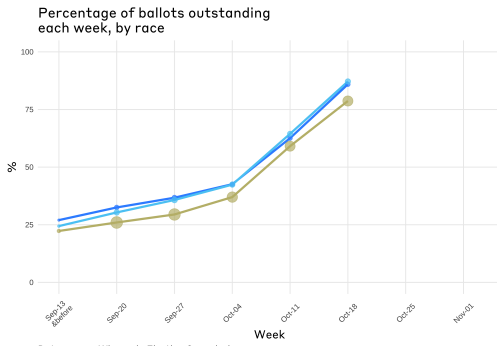


Appendix 2: Ballot Request and Return Trends by Race

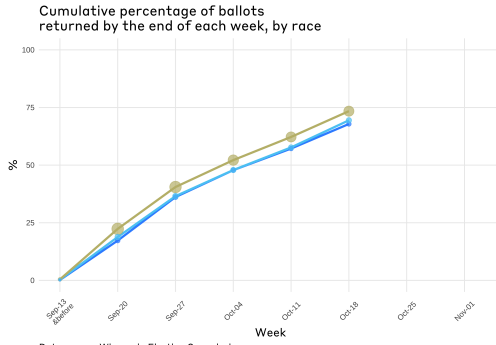




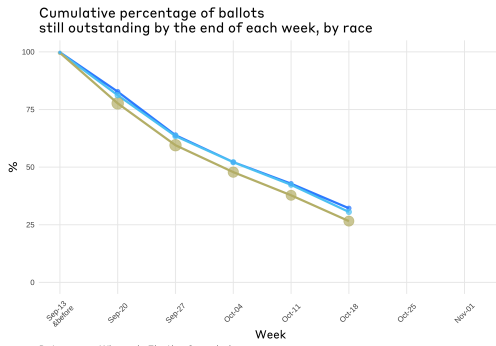
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