

Most Nevadans vote before Election Day

By Suzy Khimm, Washington Post

The first presidential debate hasn't even happened, but voters have already started to cast their ballots this week in Iowa. Thirty-two states and the District of Columbia allow early voting in person without any excuse required, and over the course of October, polls will begin opening in Ohio, North Carolina, Nevada, and elsewhere, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. In addition, 27 states allow absentee voting by mail before election day without having to provide an excuse. I talked to Paul Gronke, a political scientist at Reed College and early-voting expert, to understand what we can glean from the first ballots cast.

First, Gronke stresses that it's a misconception that most early voters will miss out on all of the debates: In Florida, for instance, early voting doesn't start until Oct. 27, just a week before the election. So while early voting is extremely popular in certain states—in Nevada and Colorado, it accounts for more than two-thirds of the ballots cast—many of these voters will actually be waiting until late October to cast their ballots. Right now, “very few people are actually casting ballots,” Gronke says.

What's more, there are certain voters who are more likely to vote early than others: those who are older and more highly educated, and who tend to be more set in their political beliefs, he adds. So early voters are more likely to be Republican, given the demographic make-up of the GOP's base, regardless of who will ultimately win the election.

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