

Early voting will have several potential effects on Michigan voters.

Will early voting increase voter turnout? Early voting (EV) provides more opportunities for voters to cast their ballots, which may lead to increased voter turnout overall. However, with no reason absentee voting, there is no need to go to the polls at all. Voters who may have difficulty making it to the polls on Election Day and want to tabulate their own ballot, may be more likely to participate with the option to vote early.

Early voting can reduce lines on Election Day. This is true but it also costs a great deal more to implement for election administrations. As with other things, convenience translates to higher costs.

Most likely the combination of three types of voting in Michigan will evolve as time moves on. In Conway Township, I envision minimal changes for 2024.

We will be conducting early voting for the nine days required by the constitution. Only time will tell how many people we see. With a minimum of four workers working for at least eight hours a day for nine extra days, the cost will be significant. Also, we need to purchase about \$10,000 to \$15,000 of equipment if we are going to administer EV ourselves.

If we partner with the county or surrounding municipalities, the cost initially may be higher, then it could be reduced eventually. In 2027, we may need to replace all our equipment due to the useful life predictions made in 2017. This will be very costly.

We have seen a large increase in absentee voting since 2018. I had a handful of people inquire about tabulating their ballot early in 2022.

Overall, early voting can provide several benefits for Michigan voters, including increased voter turnout, convenience, reduced lines on Election Day. One way or another, it is important that every eligible voter exercises their right and responsibility to vote. I look forward to seeing you at the township hall at some point during each election cycle.