

Over the past few days, many Mercer County voters have received a letter from Secretary of State Jesse White's office alerting them that they have not applied for a Vote by Mail ballot, and they should contact my office to complete their application.

These letters have been sent to voters throughout Illinois from the Secretary of State's office.

The letters were part of the mandate of SB 1863, the election bill passed by the state legislature in May as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It requires election authorities, such as the Mercer County Clerk, to send a mail ballot application to every voter who has voted in any of the past three elections.

The law also stipulates that the Secretary of State shall send, by Sept. 15, 2020, a notice to any voter in Illinois who received an application for a mail ballot but according to State Board of Elections records has not yet applied for a mail ballot.

However, the notices do not accurately reflect the current status of Vote by Mail applications my office has received from Mercer County voters. Many voters who have applied for mail ballots, as well as voters who have no interest in voting by mail, have received these letters.

I assure those who have applied for mail ballots that my office has been processing your applications, and Vote by Mail ballots will be sent to Mercer County voters who have requested them beginning September 24 and should start arriving in homes the following week.

And to those voters who do not want to vote by mail, I assure you that this is not part of any effort to pressure anyone into voting by mail. In-person early voting and Election Day polling places will be available as always to any voters who prefer to utilize those options.