



ZACH FRAILEY, AP

Early voters cast their ballots at Vernon Park Mall in Kinston, N.C., on Thursday.

New way to get out the vote: Public shaming

Fredreka Schouten

@fschouten
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON In the frantic race to turn out voters on Election Day, interest groups are relying on new forms of public shaming to get you to the polls.

In Alaska and Colorado, for instance, conservative groups have sent out mailers that compare your voting record to your neighbors' voting histories. The Alaska mailer, funded by a super PAC with a Texas address, goes further and threatens to send an updated report card after the election that will tell your friends, neighbors and work colleagues whether you actually cast a ballot.

In Oregon, a coalition of unions and liberal groups is taking peer pressure to a new level with an app — didtheyvote.org — that allows users to check their Facebook friends' names against Oregon's official voting records to see whether they have voted.

(Registered voters in Oregon — along with those in Washington and Colorado — have received their ballots by mail and must return them by Tuesday.)

Getting nagged to vote by your social media friends "is a far more welcoming contact than someone you don't know knocking on your door," said Ben Unger, executive director of Our Oregon, the group behind the new app that is aimed at getting young people to vote.

As invasive as the social pressure seems, the practice is legal.

Paul Gronke of the Early Voting Information Center at Reed College in Portland, Ore., said the app "does feel like Big Brother is looking over your shoulder."

To be sure, political parties, candidates and interest groups are deploying traditional methods across the country to turn out the vote. In North Carolina, the League of Conservation Voters is spending \$5 million to boost Democratic Sen. Kay Hagan. The environmental group plans to knock on more than 640,000

doors by Election Day, spokesman Jeff Gohringer said.

In Colorado, Americans for Prosperity, a conservative group affiliated with billionaire industrialist David Koch, has knocked on nearly 200,000 doors, said Dustin Zvonek, the group's state director. The group supplemented its efforts by sending mailers to conservative-leaning Coloradans who vote occasionally. The mailers compare their voting histories with the perfect records of some neighbors.

In Alaska, the Opportunity Alliance PAC's mailing opens with this line: "What if your friends, your neighbors and your community knew whether you voted?"

Gail Fenumiai, director of Alaska's elections division, said her office has received "dozens and dozens" of complaints. Two people have canceled their voter registrations in protest of the mailings, she said. "What they are doing isn't illegal, but whether it's tasteful, I would question that," she said of the mailers.