



We, the undersigned Democratic State Party Chairs, are calling for immediate federal and state action to ensure that every eligible voter has the opportunity to cast their ballot without the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.

The United States of America is simultaneously in the midst of an unprecedented global viral outbreak and an extremely consequential series of elections. The rapid spread of COVID-19 has halted virtually all public gatherings and rendered the act of leaving one's home for non-essential reasons dangerous. As things stand, both of these acts are necessary for millions of American voters to uphold their Constitutional right to select their representatives.

Every state is currently unprepared to address the seismic shift in election administration necessary to ensure the 2020 election proceeds during a pandemic and must start implementing these changes by mid-April. The funding is needed right now to protect the 2020 election.

If left unchanged, our current electoral system poses a severe public health risk that could rapidly accelerate the spread of COVID-19 while disenfranchising countless voters and calling into question the legitimacy of our elections. Just like our healthcare system and our economy, our elections infrastructure will need a massive infusion of resources to ensure that elections can go on and every voter has access to the ballot during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To remedy this untenable situation, we urge federal lawmakers to immediately appropriate at least \$2 billion for state and local elections administrators to implement the following reforms:

- a universal and easily accessible vote-by-mail system which should include:
 - provisions for free or prepaid postage,
 - allowing ballots postmarked by election day to count,
 - reforming any signature match laws to protect voters,
 - and allowing community organizations to collect and deliver voted, sealed ballots.
- extended early voting periods to allow for in-person voters to practice social distancing
- expanded voter registration options, including both online and same-day registration
- voter outreach and education to raise awareness around these changes
- prohibition of polling place adjustments that disproportionately affect marginalized communities
- ensure that the millions of overseas American voters can participate fully in the political process

We recognize that these proposals are not made in a vacuum and that the debate surrounding electoral reform is mired in partisanship. However, we are also heartened to see political leaders setting aside party affiliation and acting in the best interest of our nation. As our government takes action to protect our economy from COVID-19, we cannot and will not allow our democracy to fall by the wayside.

Action to safeguard our electoral system cannot wait. In a matter of weeks, millions of Americans across several states will be asked to vote in municipal and primary elections, and they deserve better than the impossible choice between preserving their well-being and casting their ballots.

Federal, state and local policymakers and election officials need to act right now to protect the health of our families, neighbors and communities and ensure that our core democratic functions including elections can continue to function.

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