



Democratic National Committee
ATTN: Chairman Tom Perez
430 South Capitol Street Southeast
Washington, DC 20003

Republican National Committee
ATTN: Ronna Romney McDaniel
310 First Street Southeast
Washington, DC 20003

March 24, 2020

Chairman Perez and Chairwoman McDaniel:

On behalf of our nearly 500,000 members and supporters, the League of Women Voters of the United States urges you to take steps to expand access and flexibility for voters for the primary election for any state yet to hold its 2020 primary. Since the World Health Organization labeled the coronavirus a global pandemic, our attention must be on prevention and precaution, treatment, and the short- and long-term economic impact of COVID-19 on families and communities while balancing the constitutional right to vote.

At this historic moment, our country and voters must have confidence in their government and elected leaders to carry out their sacred duty to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States by ensuring that free and fair elections remain accessible and unimpeded.

We have seen elected officials in many states step up on behalf of voters, taking precautions for poll workers, partnering across the aisle, and calling for more flexibility in voting. These actions demonstrate our ability to come together as a country. Our top priority must be the health and safety of the American people while simultaneously upholding the rights of all voters.

For example, recently the Chairs of the Indiana Democratic and Republican Committees sent a joint letter to the Indiana Election Commission encouraging the Commission to exercise its powers under the state constitution to provide greater flexibility to voters in casting their ballots for the primary election in their state. We are urging both national political committees to follow Indiana's lead to advise local election officials to take steps to:

- Broaden the absentee ballot process to allow any registered voter to vote absentee, as allowable;
- Encourage Election Commissions to use its discretion to temporarily suspend the rules that currently govern who can request a vote-by-mail absentee ballot for primary elections and waive requirements of voters to provide a reason for a vote-by-mail application;
- Allow voters to return ballots by hand-delivery or mail to any polling location within the county, as allowed by law; and



- Extend the absentee-by-mail application deadline to occur between 10-12 days before an election, effectively giving voters a reasonable time to return completed ballots to county officials.

Additional considerations for state election officials should include:

- Free postage or prepaid postage by government on mail ballots;
- Reformation of signature matching laws and robust training on signature match and certification for poll workers;
- Ballots postmarked on or before Election Day are acceptable for count; and
- Extensions for elections administrators to count all eligible ballots.

The coronavirus pandemic has caused unexpected considerations by state election officials related to primary elections and requires election officials to make tough decisions in the best interest of voters, poll workers, local election officials, and administrators. This added flexibility will, of course, add to the time it takes for election results to be counted. Under these circumstances, it is vital that all citizens can vote safely and appropriate time is allotted to ensure all votes are fully counted.

Because this is uncharted territory for many localities, the guidance and direction provided by the national political committees carries significant weight in supporting all the individuals involved with administering elections at this important time.

The League of Women Voters is committed to ensuring our elections remain safe and accessible for all and we welcome the opportunity to work with you to support efforts to expand access and ensure flexibility for voters.

Warmly,

Virginia Kase

CEO

vkase@lww.org