



Maryland Association of Election Officials
Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

July 6, 2020

The Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Governor of Maryland
State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

Michael R. Cogan, Esq., Chairman
Linda H. Lamone, Esq., State Administrator
P.O. Box 6486
151 West Street, Suite 200
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: 2020 Presidential General Election

Dear Governor Hogan, Chairman Cogan, and Administrator Lamone:

On behalf of the local Election Directors and other professional election administrators in the State of Maryland, I am writing to communicate, in the strongest possible terms, our opposition to both Option 1 and Option 2 presented in the State Board of Elections' "Report on June 2 Election & Recommendations for November 3 Election". We agree with the State Board of Elections in unanimously rejecting Option 1.

We strongly recommend that you reject Option 2. This ill-advised option would rely on spending millions of dollars to mail absentee ballot applications, rather than mailing ballots directly to every eligible voter. In our memorandum of June 20, 2020, we outlined a roadmap to success for the 2020 Presidential General Election. The "hybrid" approach we suggested is a variant of Option 3, including increased access to in-person vote centers during Early Voting and on Election Day, and sending a special mailing to all active and pending voters to verify their correct address, as well as sending a forwardable mailing to inactive voters. These steps will help ensure ballots are delivered to the correct voter at the correct address.

We cannot overstate the devastating consequences likely to result if the State of Maryland does not plan now to mail every voter a ballot for the 2020 Presidential General Election. Based on our experience during the Primary Election, all ballots for the General Election should be mailed directly to voters in September. This ensures the voters will have their ballots in a timely manner and that the Local Boards of Elections will have the ability to accurately and efficiently process and tabulate the ballots.

Based on our observations of the conduct of the 2020 Primary Election in several states which required a Vote by Mail ballot application, a Vote by Mail application should NOT be sent to every registered voter in Maryland prior to sending a ballot. Election Officials in Georgia

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reportedly spent \$5 million to \$10 million mailing every voter a Vote by Mail ballot application and were overwhelmed by more last-minute applications than they could successfully process in time for Election Day. Voters went to the polls instead and Georgia ended up extending voting hours in more than 20 counties across the state.


In the Primary Election, the District of Columbia also mailed every voter an application to vote by mail. The extra step proved costly, inefficient, and unsuccessful. Voters went to the polls instead of completing the application and waited in lines as long as five hours to vote on Election Day. For the General Election, the District will now be following the example of the State of Maryland and will mail every voter a ballot for the General Election (similar to "Option 3").

Requiring a Vote by Mail Application will cause voter confusion and creates a risk that the voters will not receive their ballot in time for the General Election. In our professional opinion, having mailed a ballot directly to all eligible voters during the Primary Election, it will create unnecessary confusion for the voting process if the voters now need to submit an application for their ballot in the General Election. Based on our experience, we know how important it is to use the same process between a Primary and a General Election. We believe there will be unintended consequences stemming from requiring voters to complete an application prior to mailing a Vote by Mail ballot. The Local Boards of Elections do not have enough personnel to process and manage all of the anticipated requests, in addition to receiving and processing voted ballots.

The Local Boards of Elections must carefully manage limited resources in time, funding, and staff in order to successfully conduct the 2020 Presidential General Election. Mailing applications first, performing data entry on last-minute requests, and then relying on a vendor to print and mail the ballots in a timely manner, will needlessly pose risks greater than the issues encountered in the Presidential Primary Election. Additionally, our goal is to protect public safety by minimizing crowds and long lines during in-person voting. By mailing a ballot directly to all voters, Maryland can continue to lead the nation in protecting the public health of its citizens. We believe requiring voters to complete an application prior to receiving their Vote by Mail ballot will increase the in-person turnout at the vote centers.

The election officials in the state of Maryland need adequate time to implement the policies, processes, and procedures for the November 3, 2020 Presidential General Election. The Local Boards of Elections are being asked to order supplies, including PPE, without a clear plan for conducting the General Election. It is critical we have your decision regarding the conduct of the election as soon as possible so we may focus our limited resources effectively and not waste county funds needlessly. Since time is of the essence, we respectfully need your decision regarding the conduct of the General Election no later than July 10, 2020. We urge you to approve the hybrid Option 3 approach we recommend.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Garreis", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Garreis, President

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cc: The Honorable Bill Ferguson, President, Maryland State Senate
The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker of the House, Maryland House of Delegates
The Honorable J.B. Jennings, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Steve Hershey, Senate Minority Whip
The Honorable Nicholas Kipke, House Minority Leader
The Honorable Kathy Szeliga, House Minority Whip
The Honorable Bernard Young, Mayor, Baltimore City
County Executives
County Commissioners
County Council Members
Michael Sanderson, Executive Director, Maryland Association of Counties

