



Maryland Association of Election Officials

Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

July 24, 2020

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

RE: 2020 Presidential General Election - Vacant Election Judge Positions

Dear Governor Hogan:

The staff of the 24 Local Boards of Elections (LBEs) are non-partisan professionals dedicated to ensuring every eligible voter in the State of Maryland has a safe and convenient opportunity to cast their ballot. The LBEs take their responsibilities to the voters, the State Board of Elections (SBE), and the elected leadership of Maryland seriously. We pride ourselves on our ability to comply with the policies and procedures set forth to conduct each Election. However, due to the extraordinary issues and the public health crisis confronting the LBEs as we prepare for the 2020 General Election, we are entering an emergency situation that risks the success of the Presidential General Election due to the number of vacant Election Judge positions statewide.

As of July 23, 2020, the LBEs have 13,970 vacant Election Judges positions between Early Voting and Election Day. Additionally, the Election Judge commitments we have today are fleeting. As the public health crisis worsens, Election Judges who confirmed their service for the General Election will drop out with greater frequency. Recruiting Election Judges is the most difficult task for the Local Boards under normal circumstances. In the midst of the public health crisis, it is turning into an impossible task. The LBEs will not be able to make up for the Election Judge short-fall. The only recourse for the local Election Boards will be to consolidate polling places in order to manage in-person voting with the available Election Judge resources.

The Maryland Association of Election Officials has a roadmap to successfully conduct the General Election. We need to encourage all voters to complete and submit their Vote by Mail applications early. We need to employ Vote Centers instead of the ad hoc consolidation of polling places. We need authorization to begin canvassing the returned vote by mail ballots before Election Day. Based on our experience canvassing ballots during the Primary Election we recommend beginning canvassing 30 days before Election Day. We may have historic turnout this election and we need to work together now to avoid the worst outcome: voter confusion and long lines during a pandemic.

The Honorable Governor Hogan

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On behalf of the LBEs, the leadership of the Maryland Association of Election Officials would like to schedule a meeting with you to discuss our concerns, the conduct of the 2020 General Election, and the solutions for these issues, including adopting the use of Vote Centers, mailing a Vote by Mail ballot or application directly to the voters, and increasing the number of days for in-person voting. Since time is of the essence, please email me at david.garreis@maryland.gov or call 410-222-0405 to schedule a meeting at the earliest date and time of your convenience.

Sincerely,



David Garreis, President

Maryland Association of Election Officials

cc: Michael R. Cogan, Esq., Chairman, Maryland State Board of Elections
Michael Sanderson, Executive Director, Maryland Association of Counties