



October 4, 2018

Franklin County Board of Elections
1700 Morse Road
Columbus, OH 43229

Dear Members of the Franklin County Board of Elections,

We represent the Ohio Voter Rights Coalition, a non-partisan network of local, state, and national voting advocates. Members supporting this letter include ACLU of Ohio, Advancement Project, All Voting is Local Ohio, Council on American-Islamic Relations Ohio—Columbus Chapter, Common Cause Ohio, Fair Elections Center, League of Women Voters of Ohio, Northeast Ohio Voter Advocates, and Policy Matters Ohio.

We urge you to reconsider your recent decision to defund television, radio, and print advertising for the November election. Voters across Franklin County look to the Board of Elections to provide accurate, nonpartisan information about their rights. Without it, voters are left in the dark about information critical to ensuring their voices are heard in our democracy.

Media coverage of the election might seem ubiquitous, but this coverage often focuses on the candidates and issues on the ballot—not the dates and times of early voting, what identification one must bring to the polls, or how to locate one’s polling place. In an age where many citizens receive information from dubious news sources, the voice of the Board of Elections as a credible and accurate source of information is even more critical. Even as recently as the special election for the 12th Congressional District in 2018, voters in Franklin County received erroneous information about their voter registration or polling place location.

While partisan groups and campaigns may have contact with voters, they do not fulfill the critical role elections officials play in educating voters. Partisan campaigns also have limited resources and may choose to focus on those who are most likely to align with their political beliefs or are likeliest to cast a ballot. As a result, independent, third party and infrequent voters may not receive information about their opportunities to cast a ballot.

In addition, those same infrequent voters may not have received the absentee ballot application sent by Secretary of State Husted, as he does not send them to voters who are in “Confirmation Status” because they missed as few as a single federal election. We estimate there are approximately 162,000 voters in Franklin County who fall into this category.

We urge you to reconsider your decision immediately. As non-partisan advocates for voters, we value the Franklin County Board of Elections’ work and stand ready to assist you. Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike B.", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Mike Brickner
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cc: Edward Leonard, director, Franklin County Board of Elections
David Payne, deputy director, Franklin County Board of Elections