



July 23, 2020

Mike Hogan
Duval County Supervisor of Elections
105 E. Monroe St.
Jacksonville, FL 32202
mhogan@coj.net

Dear Supervisor Hogan,

On behalf of All Voting is Local, I write to impress the importance and urgency of swiftly adapting procedures relating to vote-by-mail in response to the current Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in this critical election year. All Voting is Local is committed to ensuring that every eligible person is able to safely and conveniently register to vote, cast their ballot, and have their vote count during the upcoming primary and general elections while protecting the health and safety of voters and election personnel alike.

The necessity of social distancing has made vote-by-mail an important option for voters who may not or cannot vote in-person due to health concerns. Vote-by-mail can alleviate the number of early voting and Election Day voters at the polls, and is capable of being delivered in methods that are accessible to all voters, including voters with disabilities.

Given the limited time, we have prepared a shortlist of recommendations in regards to voting-by-mail that we urge you to adopt swiftly to ensure that voting remains fair, accessible and safe for all.

We recommend the following:

- Send all eligible voters, including inactive voters, vote-by-mail request forms with links to a printable voter registration form. This mailing should be forwardable to ensure that it is received by those on the inactive list due to address changes.
- Encourage all registered voters to update their signatures before the October 5th deadline.
- Increase public education efforts to ensure that voters are aware of deadlines for submitting their ballots, alternatives to mailing their ballots, in tracking options to ensure their ballots were received.



- Commit to prepay for Vote-By-Mail applications and return envelopes.
- An accessible system, certified by the Elections Assistance Commission, that can mark and print ballots online before submission in paper form should be established to allow voters with disabilities to vote privately and independently by mail.
- Requests for vote-by-mail ballots after the mailing date, especially Election Day emergency requests, should be quickly processed for those who are ill or need a designee. In addition, fear of COVID-19 should be accepted as an emergency.
- Establish a multi-step signature verification process, incorporating signature verification software, to reduce the opportunity for unnecessary rejections due to signature mismatches.
- Ballots should be mailed out as early as possible, Supervisors of Elections should process ballots on an ongoing basis, and they should be allotted additional time for ballot processing.
- Systems for Supervisors and voters to easily track ballots at each stage of the process must be improved for security and for voters to have the assurance that their ballot is counted.
- Uniformly track the number and reasons for vote-by-mail application request rejections, as well as rejections of vote-by-mail ballots cast, and rejections of ballots requiring a cure, categorized by reasons why those ballots required a cure, so that substantive improvements to the system can continue.
- Keep safe, in-person voting options available for voters facing challenges with vote-by-mail.

We realize these are unprecedented times, but COVID-19 has created a unique opportunity to better prepare for our upcoming elections.

We welcome the opportunity to partner with you to educate voters and ensure they exercise their right to vote during this presidential election cycle. To that end, we are available to meet by conference call. Contact information can be provided for any of the specific organizations below. If you have any questions or care to discuss further, I can be reached at brad@allvotingislocal.org.



Sincerely,

Brad Ashwell, Florida State Director

All Voting is Local