



MISSOURI ASSOCIATION

of County Clerks & Election Authorities • MACCEA

May 27, 2020

The Honorable Roy Blunt
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Josh Hawley
212 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Blunt and Hawley:

As the officials tasked with administering elections in Missouri, we are committed to ensuring that every eligible voter in our state can cast a ballot. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges to our work this year, as we must not only protect the right to vote and the accuracy of the count from malicious cyber attack, but also the health and safety of our voters, staff, and poll workers. Local election officials across the state are acting now to ensure our elections are prepared for these challenges, but these needed measures come with a price tag. We applaud Congress and are grateful for the appropriation of \$7.6 million in election funding for Missouri through the CARES Act. The additional funding has made a positive difference; however we believe based on conservative estimates by election authorities across the state that this amount falls short of what is needed for safe and secure elections in 2020. Because of this, we urge you to support an additional allocation of funding for elections in the next coronavirus stimulus package and to ensure that these funds are shared directly with local election officials with no policy strings attached.

We are planning now for a record number of mail ballots as voters who never thought about voting absentee are seeking safe options to cast their vote in light of Covid-19. Preparing for this change comes with considerable cost associated with materials, printing, and postage, along with increased staff, supplies, and space to process the increase in mail ballots. And, all of this work must be done while complying with social distancing guidelines and protecting the health of our election staff.

At the same time, we must prepare our election day polling locations to protect the health of our voters and election judges. We will likely need to recruit and train a large number of new election judges, as many of our traditional judges have been identified by the CDC as at higher risk to serious illness from Covid-19. We will also need to invest in personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, and other resources to protect our voters who vote in person.

These measures come at a significant cost. A recent bi-partisan analysis released by the Alliance for Securing Democracy, the Brennan Center for Justice, Pitt Cyber, and R Street Institute estimated that it will cost Missouri an additional \$59 - \$67 million to prepare elections for the COVID-19 pandemic this year. And without additional help, local election officials will bear almost all of these costs at a time when our budgets are already strained and, in many counties, where this is no additional funding available in the county budget.

While local election officials know what it will take to run safe and secure elections this year, we need to act soon to ensure that we are prepared. We are grateful the action Congress has already taken, and urge them to continue that support by providing us with the additional resources needed to securely administer the elections that are foundational to our constitutional republic, while also protecting the public health to ensure we can administer the upcoming elections in a responsible, safe, and secure manner.

Thank you for your leadership and partnership.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RW' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rick Watson
President of the Missouri Association of County Clerks & Election Authorities
Henry County Clerk

Cc: Members of the Missouri Congressional Delegation
Leader Mitch McConnell
Speaker Nancy Pelosi
Leader Kevin McCarthy
Leader Charles E. Schumer