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July 6, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20003

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy and Leader Schumer:

Every aspect of America's electoral system is under stress well beyond the pressures of a normal presidential election year. Election officials across the country face unprecedented challenges, as they now must add protection of public health to their responsibilities for access, integrity, security, and accuracy. The combination of a pandemic, continuing cybersecurity concerns, changes in and upgrades to equipment, and opportunities to vote in more ways than ever before has significantly altered election administration in ways that are likely permanent.

Since 2000, professional development, training, and education have been the hallmark of successful election operations. As the nation transitioned from punch card and lever machines to today's electronic voting systems, local election officials and the state election offices that oversee key systems including voter registration have benefitted from professional development, training, and education about the field. Through professional development, training, and education, election officials have developed tools to address the issues brought on by COVID-19, cybersecurity challenges, expanded voting options, online tools for voters and the general public, and education about the voting process so that voters can retain trust and confidence in the American election system. We know this first hand through our work with election officials across the country who participate in the Election Center's professional certification program as well as conferences, workshops, and topic-specific training.

Federal funding for election administration through the CARES Act is a precious commodity and much appreciated by all who receive it. However, we believe that safe and secure elections require additional funding for election administration, not limited to COVID or cybersecurity,

that is available broadly for professional development, training, and education, in order to support the efforts of election officials to address today's challenges and perhaps even more important, to build capacity for the issues of the future.

Because of this, we urge you to support additional funding for elections in the next coronavirus stimulus package. Election officials across the country are preparing to hold elections in multiple ways in order to address the effects of the pandemic, and every aspect of election administration is affected. Election operations now require more staff, more training, and new logistics for finding, designing, equipping, and operating pollsites for in-person voting, and new processes to scale up to offer expanded opportunities to vote by mail, or early in-person voting. Public health requirements involve voters and workers at in-person voting sites, and also pertain to election office operations. Throughout, election offices also continue to address cybersecurity threats, both for existing operations and for the new approaches that they are required to implement.

These challenges will only grow as turnout increases, as recent primary elections have illustrated. We encourage Congress to support federal funding for such activities in the next round of coronavirus stimulus funding, to provide support more than 8,000 localities as they strive to run safe and secure elections in their communities, and the states and territories that support these efforts. We are confident that election officials know how to conduct safe and secure elections without regard to partisanship or specific policy choices, and we are dedicated to the value of professional development, training, and education in building their capacity to do so.

Respectfully,

The Election Center Board of Directors

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