



Georgia Association of Voter Registrar's and Election Officials

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July 2, 2020

The Honorable David Perdue
455 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kelly Loeffler
131 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Perdue and Loeffler:

As the officials tasked with administering elections in Georgia, we are committed to ensuring that every eligible voter in the state of Georgia can cast a ballot and have their vote counted. The Covid-19 pandemic presents unprecedented challenges for carrying out these responsibilities as we work to not only protect the right to vote, but also the health and safety of our voters, staff, and poll workers. County election officials are partnering with state leaders now to ensure that our elections are prepared for these challenges. But these efforts come with a price tag. While we applaud Congress for approving \$10.9 million in election funding for Georgia through the CARES Act, we believe that this amount falls short of what is needed for safe and secure elections in 2020. Because of this, we urge you to support substantial additional funding for elections in the next coronavirus stimulus package.

In partnership with Secretary Raffensperger, we have made substantial changes to our procedures for our elections to meet the needs of our voters. These efforts enable and encourage more voters to use safe vote-by-mail options, but they are also posing significant challenges for county election offices. Processing this spike in absentee requests and mail ballots requires more staff, supplies, equipment, and facility space. At the same time, we are investing in personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, and other resources needed to ensure healthy polling places, as in-person voting has long been the preferred option among Georgia voters. These additional costs are coming at a time when county budgets are already strained due to declining tax revenue.

With as many as four additional elections in the 2020 cycle, the cost of holding elections in Georgia is likely to be among the highest in the country. A recent analysis released by the Alliance for Securing Democracy, the Brennan Center for Justice, Pitt Cyber, and R Street Institute estimated that it will cost Georgia an additional

\$111 - \$124 million to prepare elections for the COVID-19 pandemic this year. And even with help from state election officials, local election officials will bear over 60% of these costs.

While county 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 urge Congress to partner with us in this endeavor and to provide us with the resources needed to protect our democracy and public health in 2020.

Thank you for your leadership and partnership.

Respectfully,

Dwight Belden

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