

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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**Board of Elections to Expand Ballot Drop Off Locations  
and Explore New In-Person Voting Centers**

**ANNAPOLIS (May 20, 2020)** – The Maryland Board of Elections today announced that it will expand the number of ballot drop off locations available in Baltimore from 5 to 15 for the June 2 presidential primary and will consider adding new in-person voting centers when the Board convenes today at 4:30 pm. The Board also announced it will launch a full review of its ballot mailing vendor’s performance immediately after the June 2 election.

“We are extremely disappointed that our ballot mailing vendor failed to deliver ballots on schedule and failed to notify us about their delay,” said Maryland Administrator of Elections Linda Lamone. “We will conduct a thorough review of their performance after the election. Despite this delay, ballots are being delivered daily to eligible voter addresses on file in Baltimore and Maryland. We are confident eligible voters will receive their ballots in time to cast their votes in the June 2 primary.”

To mail in their ballot, voters simply need to fill out their ballot, sign the oath on the envelope and place it back in the mail. Voters should sign only the oath on the outside of the envelope but not the ballot itself. There is no postage required to submit a ballot. The return ballot must be postmarked no later than June 2 but can be mailed at any time before election day.

The Board also announced it ordered an additional 10 ballot drop off boxes for Baltimore and will consider opening new in-person voting centers for Election Day when the Board convenes today at 4:30 pm. The locations for all 15 ballot drop off locations are listed below. Five are available now and the Board will announce later this week when the additional 10 are open.

**Baltimore Ballot Drop-off Locations Available Now:**

**Mount Pleasant Church & Ministries**

6000 Radecke Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21206

**Edmondson High School**

501 N. Athol Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21229

**University of Maryland at Baltimore**

Community Engagement Center  
1 North Poppleton Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201

**Dr. Carter G. Woodson School #160**  
2501 Seabury Road  
Baltimore, MD 21225

**Baltimore City Board of Elections**  
Benton Office Building  
417 E. Fayette Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202

**New Baltimore Ballot Drop-off Locations To Be Opened At a Later Date:**  
**Board will Announce their Openings in the Coming Days**

**Southeast Anchor Library**  
3601 Eastern Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21224

**Hamilton Elementary School #236**  
6101 Old Harford Road  
Baltimore, MD 21214

**Northwood Elementary School #242**  
5201 Loch Raven Blvd  
Baltimore, MD 21239

**Northwestern Elementary School #401**  
6900 Park Heights Avenue

**Pimlico Elementary School #223**  
4849 Pimlico Road  
Baltimore, MD 21215

**Frederick Douglas High School #450**  
2301 Gwynns Falls Pkwy  
Baltimore, MD 21217

**Digital Harbor High School #416**  
1100 Covington Street  
Baltimore, MD 21230

**Paul Dunbar School #414**  
1400 Orleans Street  
Baltimore, MD 21231

**Enoch Pratt Free Library Herring Run**  
3801 Erdman Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21213

**Hampden Elementary School #55**

3608 Chestnut Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21211

Due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, voting for the June 2 election is being conducted primarily by mail, with limited locations to submit completed ballots at designated drop-off locations or to vote in-person on election day.

The novel coronavirus pandemic resulted in the date of the Primary being postponed from April 28. While mail-in ballots display the original Primary date of April 28, the ballots are in fact valid for the June 2 election. Voters should be aware these are official ballots that will record actual votes. They are not sample ballots.

Votes cast by mail remain anonymous. The same technology and equipment used for in-person voting is utilized to count mail-in ballots. The equipment is never connected to the Internet or any other database.

The Maryland State Board of Elections is committed to educating voters on the changes made to the election procedures due to the novel coronavirus pandemic. These changes have been made to ensure voters can exercise their fundamental right to vote while also safeguarding the public's health during this pandemic.

For more information about this election, please visit [www.elections.maryland.gov](http://www.elections.maryland.gov) or contact the State Board at 1-800-222-8683.

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BILL FERGUSON  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE



ADRIENNE A. JONES  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
STATE HOUSE  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1991

May 19, 2020

State Board of Elections  
151 West Street Suite 200  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Members of the State Board of Elections,

As we quickly approach the Presidential Primary Election on June 2nd, we understand these unprecedented circumstances and the challenges facing the election system amid a global pandemic. We do have serious concerns, though, with the impacts that may result from administrative processes leading up to Election Day if remedial efforts to enhance voter confidence are not undertaken as soon as possible.

In partnership with the State Board, we hope to receive timely clarification of five key issues outlined below. Necessary steps must be taken to ensure voter confidence and make sure all eligible voters can cast a ballot, in as safe and effective manner as possible. Some of the issues raised below were also included in our letter to Governor Hogan on March 31<sup>st</sup>, as important precautions and points of effort for the State Board to incorporate to make this election inclusive and successful.

1. Additional Voting Centers

Due to the late delivery of mail-in ballots to Baltimore City and Montgomery County, it is much more likely that voters in these jurisdictions will encounter substantial hurdles to cast a ballot by Election Day. Maryland cannot afford a repeat of last month's special election on a statewide scale where over forty-thousand ballots were not delivered to voters. We applaud the State Board for moving quickly to increase the amount of ballot drop boxes, however, we do not believe this will be enough for eligible voters who do not receive a ballot, particularly in jurisdictions where mail-in ballots have not yet reached voters' mailboxes.

To remedy this situation, we ask the State Board to increase the current cap on in-person voting locations from a maximum of four to six sites per jurisdiction. We also ask the State Board to increase the number of drop-off locations for ballots in jurisdictions with delayed ballot delivery so that we reduce the risk of local boards disqualifying ballots returned late. The cost for any additional voting or drop-off sites should be largely covered by the State Board, since the local boards are not responsible for this shortcoming. We believe federal funds are available to offset the costs. In the best interests of public health and democracy, the further expansion of in-person polling locations and ballot drop-off locations will result in shorter lines and decrease chances of large crowds.

## 2. Undelivered Mail-In Request List

We understand that during last month's Special Election there was a batch of mail-in ballots, that despite being requested appropriately on-time, were delivered late to voters. Last Wednesday at a joint hearing between House and Senate members, your staff informed the group that the State Board "forgot" to deliver updated ballot request lists to the printer.

This information is incredibly disheartening and damages the public confidence in the State Board's ability to conduct a fair and secure election. The State Board cannot afford to let this happen again. No Marylander should lose their right to vote due to administrative negligence.

Please provide us with an account of how many ballots were undelivered and when they ultimately arrived to voters due to these specific circumstances.

## 3. Special Election Undelivered Ballots

Nearly one in ten (20,367) ballots went undelivered to Baltimore City voters during the Special Election due to address changes and other missing information. Additionally, over eight-thousand ballots were not delivered in Baltimore and Howard Counties.

The data shows those who are most adversely affected by a mail-in system are traditionally disenfranchised communities. Significant research shows minority voters are less likely to vote by mail, and that transient and low income populations are less likely to participate or even receive ballots – as we see here. As we transition to a primarily mail-in ballot election, there must be a comprehensive plan in place to direct resources to these communities and target voters individually to communicate alternatives to still vote if unable to cast a ballot by mail.

Please provide a response with how the State Board plans to address this issue for the June 2nd election.

#### 4. Voter Communications Strategy

A robust communications program is the centerpiece to educating the public of the significant changes made to the voting system, and the public and legislature deserves to know for certain that such public outreach is occurring. In addition, the outreach should include a component to inactive voters who are not receiving ballots, as well as to active voters who are.

In addition to addressing the particular concern above, we request that the State Board provides a detailed account of the \$1.1 million in communications spending, including budget allocation, and messaging strategy ahead of the June election. Furthermore, we strongly encourage the State Board to implement a robust communications and education campaign in jurisdictions where ballot delivery has been delayed. We expect this voter education campaign to be targeted to our communities that are most likely to experience a negative impact from delayed ballot delivery.

#### 5. Federal Funding

The Federal CARES Act included funding for states to improve election safety and security measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please provide more information on how much funding Maryland received as part of this package and how the State Board has prioritized its use.

We understand that you and your staff have been given a very difficult task. Governor Hogan's deliberations took longer than anyone expected and it has compacted your timeline considerably. Members of both parties and both chambers are rooting for a successful election and should be used as a conduit to voters. Improving communication and dialogue will be critical to success in June.

Please let us know how we can help get the word out for the June 2nd election.

Thank you,



William C. Ferguson, IV  
President of the Maryland Senate



Adrienne A. Jones  
Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY**  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

May 19, 2020

Chair Michael R. Cogan  
Maryland State Board of Elections  
151 West St., Suite 200  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Cogan & Members of the Board:

We are writing to you to express our concerns over the distribution of ballots for Maryland's June 2 primary election. As we move closer to Primary Election Day, we have heard from many of our constituents about not receiving absentee ballots yet, or who have received ballots for only some but not all eligible voters in each household. These are urgent issues that require more attention and communication with our voters.

We are also concerned about issues impacting neighboring jurisdictions. Recently, MSBE released data that over 20,000 absentee ballots were not sent to voters in a timely fashion for the all mail-in April 28th special election in the City of Baltimore. Last week, approximately 90,000 Prince George's County voters failed to receive instructions for ballots in their preferred language.

These two issues would be unacceptable under any circumstances. But particularly now, when our residents are seeing national media coverage of widespread voter suppression in other states and surveys are showing a high degree of anxiety about election administration and protection, seeing evidence of these failures in Maryland significantly undermines public confidence that the 2020 Primary and General Elections will be administered securely and effectively.

We are greatly concerned with the Board's lack of urgency and action to communicate to voters the measures being taken not only to correct the issues mentioned above, but to ensure a timely and fair election. In Montgomery County, just over two weeks before the election, there are voters who have not received their ballots. We are also concerned that the Board hired a vendor with a poor record to manage the ballot distribution and now Maryland voters are suffering the consequences. We urge the Board to share the following information:

- Why have some voters not received their absentee ballots?
- Why were absentee ballots mailed to voters only in Spanish?

- What is the track record of the current vendor?
- Why was that vendor selected?
- How many other firms bid on this contract? Did the SBE's previous contractors bid on this contract, and if not, why not? What were the contract requirements in the RFP and what was the selection process?
- What measures are being put in place to ensure all voters can vote on June 2 and in the general election?

We urge the State Board to hold an emergency meeting to review these pressing issues and to do everything in its power now to prevent other problems. Lastly, we ask the Board to pro-actively solicit input or feedback from Maryland's 24 jurisdictions on the performance of the 2020 Primary Election and to conduct a vigorous post-mortem analysis in time for changes to be made in the General Election.

The Board of Elections has the monumental responsibility to ensure each voter can exercise their constitutional right to vote. Currently, there is a lack of confidence in the Board's distribution of absentee ballots. We want to work with you to restore that confidence.

We look forward to your prompt, written response.

Sincerely,



Sidney Katz  
President



Tom Hucker  
Vice President



Gabe Albornoz  
Councilmember At-Large



Evan Glass  
Councilmember At-Large



Will Jawando  
Councilmember At-Large



Hans Riemer  
Councilmember At-Large



Andrew Friedson  
Councilmember District 1



Craig Rice  
Councilmember District 2



Nancy Navarro  
Councilmember District 4

May 20, 2020

Members, Maryland State Board of Elections  
151 West Street, Suite 200  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
cc: Linda H. Lamone, State Administrator

RE: Proposed changes to mitigate week-long delay in mailing of ballots

Dear Chairman and Members of the Board:

Although the State Board of Elections has taken some appropriate steps to address the weeklong delay of mail-in ballots in Baltimore City, additional immediate steps are needed to ensure every City voter is provided with ample time and access to voting in the Primary Election.

Baltimore City, a jurisdiction that is made up of primarily Black voters with one of the most critical elections in the state, will have less time to vote their ballot by June 2nd because of delays in ballot delivery. We know from the 7th Congressional District special general election that nearly 80% of ballot rejections were because the ballot was mailed or delivered late. The delay in mailing ballots to voters leaves little or no time for voters to get replacement ballots if theirs do not arrive.

The late ballot delivery is also a problem because we know a number of ballots will not be successfully delivered to voters due to bad addresses. All of these factors, in addition to the limited investment being made in voter outreach and education in the City and throughout the state, leave Baltimore voters at a disadvantage. In order to ensure all eligible voters can participate in the June 2nd primary, the Board must take immediate steps to address these issues. We urge you to consider our recommendations outlined below:

#### **Vote Centers**

- Make two additional in-person vote centers available on Election Day. We ask that the local board of elections consider making these two vote centers the Training Center in Pimlico and the League for People with Disabilities, helping to close the gap in distance of vote centers and making them more accessible to Baltimore City voters.
- Make in-person vote centers available prior to Election Day. Vote centers should be open from at least Friday, May 29th until Election Day. These centers should be open from 7am-8pm, providing voters who don't receive their ballots with ample time to vote in-person.

#### **Extend Deadline for Electronic Ballot Delivery**

- Baltimore City voters who are unable to vote in person must be provided with more time to access an electronic ballot. We urge the Board to extend the current May 29th deadline to Election Day.
- We also urge the local board of elections to look into ways to assist voters who have no access to a printer. We encourage local boards to be allowed to open for curbside printing and delivery of replacement ballots and voter registration forms and to work with community groups to help voters get registered and get their ballots.

#### **Extend Deadline for Ballot Acceptance**

- Accept ballots that are postmarked by Election Day (or in the hands of the post office by Election Day) to be counted if received by the second Friday after Election Day, June 12, 2020.

We understand that you and your staff have been given a very difficult task, but we must do all that we can to ensure Baltimore City voters have equitable access to voting. We hope that you will consider our recommendations in order to provide relief for the error that has taken place.

Thank you,

Joanne Antoine, **Common Cause Maryland**  
Lois Hybl, **League of Women Voters of Maryland**  
Emily Scarr, **Maryland PIRG**