STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS P.O. BOX 6486, ANNAPOLIS, MD 21401-0486 PHONE (410) 269-2840

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September 21, 2020

<u>Via Electronic Mail Only</u>

The Honorable Bill Ferguson President of the Senate State House, H-107 100 State Circle Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Paul Pinsky Chair, Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing 11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

President Ferguson and Chairman Pinsky,

As requested in your joint letter dated June 23, 2020, I am pleased to provide this update on the voter education and public outreach campaign for the November election. SBE has contracted with KO Public Affairs, LLC to manage the campaign, along with a number of subcontractors to oversee production, media, and outreach to Maryland's diverse communities. SBE appreciates your interest in the public outreach campaign and looks forward to working with you to educate Maryland voters about the upcoming election.

Under the approved scope of work, the campaign team is charged with developing a statewide campaign, including TV, radio, print, digital and earned media, to supplement SBE's social media campaign, along with broad stakeholder engagement to sufficiently reach Maryland's minority community. In addition to KO, the campaign team includes:

- **Mission Media** a full-service advertising and marketing firm to assist with creative design, campaign production and media buying.
- **Sandy Hillman Communications** a public relations firm and womanowned minority business enterprise to assist with earned media and stakeholder engagement throughout the state.
- **GreiBO** a public relations and marketing firm based in Baltimore to assist with stakeholder outreach to the African American community statewide, including webinars, key influencer messaging and social media.

- **Cool & Associates** a full-service management consulting firm that brings Hispanic strategy, workforce development, education, marketing and outreach to the forefront of any organization. Veronica Cool and her team are assisting with broad stakeholder outreach to the Latino community, Spanishspeaking earned media, and translation of all campaign materials.
- **Campfire Communications** a full-service communications firm led by Henry Fawell working with Hillman Communications on earned media, stakeholder outreach and rapid response during the campaign.

Part I: Campaign Overview:

A paid media campaign is currently underway to educate voters on participating in the upcoming 2020 Presidential General Election. The campaign's \$1.3M budget is allocated across general population media statewide – digital, broadcast TV and cable, radio, and print – and includes paid media and stakeholder outreach targeting Maryland's African American, Latino and Asian American Pacific Islander communities.

In coordination with stakeholder engagement, the paid campaign attempts to educate Marylanders on the full electoral process from registering to vote and updating voter information to requesting, completing and returning mail-in ballots; and options for in-person early voting and election day voting.

Digital Campaign

A combination of statewide digital paid advertising, including social media and search engine marketing, is being utilized to deliver specific messages throughout the duration of the campaign. Digital platforms allow us to reach our audience with more relevant and targeted messaging and provide better data and metrics to analyze the results of a campaign. Digital is especially beneficial as the interactive ads link viewers directly to the correct campaign landing page to educate and provide additional detailed information.

The digital media campaign launched on August 27th with six messages targeted toward appropriate audiences:

- ★ Register to Vote
- ★ Request a Ballot
- ★ Vote Early or on Election Day
- \star Return Your Ballot
- ★ Make Your Vote Count (Inactive/Infrequent Voters)
- ★ Register to Vote / Request a Ballot (African American influencer campaign)

Key Messages and Dates

★ Register to Vote (8/27 - 10/13/20); Call to Action: Register Now

- This campaign will run until the voter registration deadline on October 13th, urging Maryland households to register to vote or verify and update their voter information. Registered voters and those who have requested a mail-in ballot will be excluded.
- Maryland households are defined as users whose information does not appear on any of the lists provided by the State Board of Elections. This campaign will have an additional layer of geographic targeting explained below in an effort to reach all areas of the state equally.

★ Request a Ballot (8/27 - 10/20/20); Call to Action: Request Your Ballot

- Running until the October 20th deadline for the return of the mail-in ballot application, this campaign will target Maryland households as well as registered voters with ads urging them to request a mail-in ballot. Those who have already requested a mail-in ballot, as well as inactive voters (defined as those who are unreachable by mail), will be excluded.
- ★ Return Your Ballot (10/5 11/3/20); Call to Action: Find a Drop Box
 - This campaign will target those who have already requested a mail-in ballot with unique messaging reminding them to return their ballot by November 3rd.
- ★ Make Your Vote Count (inactive or infrequent voters) (9/10 10/13/20); Call to Action: Start Here
 - This campaign will target inactive voters with a message reminding them to verify or update their voter information and to request a mail-in ballot. Those who have already requested a mail-in ballot will be excluded.
 - Inactive voters are defined as those who did not vote in the last presidential general election or this year's primary as well as the list provided by the State Board of Elections of voters who were not able to be reached by mail.
 - Although this campaign ends upon the voter registration deadline, this audience will be added into the final week of the Vote (including

by mail) campaign detailed below to ensure they receive the message detailing how to request a ballot before the deadline.

- ★ Vote (early voting and election day options) (10/21 11/3/20); Call to Action: Find a Vote Center
 - Once the mail-in ballot return date has passed, the Vote campaign detailed above will shift messaging to support early voting and election day options, including voting at a voting center and using drop boxes. Those who had requested a mail-in ballot will be excluded.

Traditional Media – TV, Radio and Print

In conjunction with the paid digital campaign, we are using traditional media statewide for increased visibility for the select key messages. Traditional media broadens the audience, raises awareness, and helps increase the reach and frequency of messaging to Maryland's 18+ population.

Traditional media, including a statewide purchase of TV, Radio and Print/Newspaper publications, began running on September 13th.

The initial flight of September 13th – October 13th includes all three mediums, with a primary message of Request a Ballot, and secondary messaging of Registering to Vote and In-Person Voting options.

From October 14th – November 3rd, Radio and Print will be used to encourage Early Voting while still presenting information about Election Day Voting as a secondary message. A second TV ad is currently under production with similar messaging.

The allocation of the overall media buy is based broadly on the population of Maryland residents across the state. Broad media is in place to reach a diverse audience, inclusive of all political perspectives. Please see Section II for a breakdown of the media buy by medium and region, as well as a sample of the campaign's creative assets.

African American Engagement

The campaign is engaging the African American community using paid media throughout the state, including TV (broadcast and cable), radio, print and Digital, and African American radio, print and non-traditional publications such as the Root.

Within the traditional media strategy, specific publications, stations and networks that index well against the 18+ African American community were selected. Many of these vendors provided additional value within their owned digital media

channels, including posting on their social media, email blasts, interview opportunities and digital ads.

Focus radio stations include Radio One (92Q, WOLB, Magic - Baltimore, Majic - DC Metro), WEAA - Morgan State University and WHUR - Howard University. African American print media include the Washington Informer (including a special "Stay Safe and Vote" Issue on October 1st), and the Afro American Newspapers in Prince George's County and Baltimore.

As a part of the overall digital media strategy, an overlay of an "influencer" public awareness campaign will specifically target select geographic areas and zip codes. The campaign will produce a community influencer video featuring trusted voices designed to inform voters about the upcoming election. The video message aimed at registration and voter engagement will be delivered via social channels, and effectiveness will be measured based on click-throughs and interactions with the SBE landing page.

In addition to the paid media and stakeholder outreach, the campaign is utilizing incommunity events such as sound trucks and COVID-safe street teams to distribute informational flyers about the election and developing a series of events designed to bring together community leaders and key influencers to educate Marylanders about the election. These community leaders include civic, business and faith-based leaders as well as prominent Black restaurateurs and personalities and DJs.

While not a part of the campaign, SBE is excited that the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore City will be utilizing SBE's MD Votes campaign materials to help educate Baltimore City residents about the election while also providing online resources with its mobile hot spots and curbside locations.

Hispanic Engagement

Paid advertising for the Hispanic community is allocated across radio, print, and digital platforms El Zol radio and digital, Radio America and Radio Poder+, Mundo Latino print and digital, El Tiempo print and digital and El Poder de Se Mujur print and digital.

Earned media for the Hispanic community focuses on outlets that have a robust online presence, given how most people are consuming news in this environment, including:

- morning network and cable TV news shows;
- radio news programs and podcasts, including El Zol and Ke'Pachanga digital radio, which reach the Hispanic community;
- statewide print and online outlets, including community newspapers including Mundo Latino and El Tiempo Latino.

The campaign is taking advantage of value-add and earned media opportunities, leveraging available Spanish spokesperson, Dr. Gilberto Zelaya from the Montgomery County Board of Elections, by pitching the key messages and election updates to media partners across the State. As of September 10th, the campaign has been successful in facilitating over ten media interviews, as well as distributing all SBE press releases in Spanish.

The campaign is engaging local stakeholders and community organizations, in essence, the trusted voices of the community like CASA, Latino Providers Network and the Chambers of Commerce to educate Maryland voters about the election. Currently, there are over 200 partners on the outreach list, representing various industries, geographies and functions to ensure extensive reach into the Latino community.

In addition, the campaign is engaging with key influencers on social media to amplify key points and lend credibility to the outreach efforts and producing a Spanish-language testimonial video that will leverage trusted community leaders and influencers to educate the Latino voter and encourage voter participation. The video will be shared via social media, paid digital advertising and stakeholder outreach.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Engagement

In addition to the broadly targeted media, specific efforts have been made to educate and engage the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities about the voting process and upcoming election. Print ads have been placed in the World Journal, Asian Fortune News, China Times, Saigon Broadcasting Network, Korea Daily, AsAmNews and Mochi Magazine. A Digital campaign targeting AAPI registered voters will extend the reach and provide key voting information with direct links to the State Board of Elections MD Votes website.

Stakeholder Outreach and Earned Media

The broad stakeholder outreach and earned media campaign is intended to supplement the paid campaign to reach and engage stakeholder groups representing Maryland's Black, Latino, AAPI, Disability, LGBTQ communities, as well as Maryland's non-profit, business, religious and faith-based organizations, and veterans, seniors, homeless, justice-involved, and other hard to reach communities.

Since the campaign began on August 3rd, SBE has distributed over ten press releases informing the media and key stakeholders about updates in the election process. These press releases have been distributed in English and Spanish to media outlets and hundreds of stakeholder groups throughout the state. The press releases are available In English and Spanish on SBE's website.

Maryland State Board of Elections Posts Early Voting and Election Day Voting Center Locations - Released 9/16/2020 La Junta Electoral de Maryland Publica Centros de Votación Anticipada y de Votación del Día de las Elecciones - Released 9/16/2020

Maryland State Board of Elections Issues Statement on USPS Postcard (PDF) -Released 9/15/2020

La Junta Electoral del Estado de Maryland Emite una Declaración sobre las Tarjetas Postales del USPS (PDF) - Released 9/15/2020

<u>Maryland State Board of Elections Announces Printing Contract for Mail-In Ballots</u> -Released 9/11/2020

<u>Get Your Ballot Sent by Mail, Not Email, to Save Time and Money (PDF)</u> - Released 9/8/2020

Board of Elections Approves Vote Center Plans for Four Counties (PDF) - Released 9/4/2020

<u>Applications for General Election Mail-In Ballots On the Way to Eligible Maryland</u> <u>Voters (PDF)</u> - Released 8/31/2020

Las Solicitudes de Papeletas o Boletas de Votación para la Elección General Ya Están En Camino Hacia los Electores Elegibles de Maryland (PDF) - Released 8/31/2020

Maryland State Board of Elections Encourages Eligible Residents to Register to Vote in November's General Election (PDF) - Released 8/27/2020

La Junta Electoral del Estado de Maryland Motiva a los Residentes Elegibles a Registrarse para Votar en la Elección General de Noviembre (PDF) - Released 8/27/2020

Maryland State Board of Elections Increases Ballot Drop Boxes For General Election (PDF) - Released 8/19/2020

Board of Elections USPS Statement (PDF) - Released 8/14/2020

Declaración de la Junta de Elecciones de USPS (PDF) - Released 8/14/2020

Board of Elections Approves Early Voting Days for General Election (PDF) - Released 8/13/2020

Board Seeks to Open 282 Voting Centers Statewide On Election Day (PDF) -Released 8/7/2020

Board sets October 20 Deadline for Voters to Submit Application for General Election Mail-in Ballots (PDF) - Released 8/5/2020

Online Communications Hub - MD Votes Webpage and Social Media Channels

Working with SBE and using the existing state website and social media channels, the campaign created an MD Votes communications hub or webpage to provide a one-stop for all information related to the 2020 General Election. The MD Votes webpage - <u>www.elections.maryland.gov/2020</u> - includes recognizable iconography from the paid campaign to provide information related to the voting process.

The MD Votes webpage also includes a detailed <u>voter guide</u>, <u>social media toolkit</u> and <u>video tutorials</u>, produced by the SBE team, to walk Maryland voters through the process to request and return their ballot. These tools have been shared broadly with all members of the General Assembly, the media and stakeholders.

Webinars and Forums

SBE is committed to participating in a number of webinars and community forums in advance of the election. Representatives from SBE routinely participate in an Elections Workgroup meeting hosted by the advocacy community, including Common Cause, NAACP, Out for Justice and so many others. This regular forum has allowed SBE to share up-to-date information with key stakeholders and solicit feedback.

SBE has participated or is planning to participate in the following community forums with others likely to be added:

- Virtual Hispanic Stakeholder Listening on August 28th hosted by Cool & Associates
- Virtual Conversation with African American Stakeholders on August 28th hosted by GreiBO.
- "Election 2020 Make Your Plan event" on September 8th hosted by Mt. Olive Baptist Church (serving Prince George's, DC, and VA)
- Virtual Meeting with Representatives of Recognized Political Parties on September 10th
- Baltimore Archdiocese Pastor Meeting on September 15th
- "2020 Vision, Our Voice, Our Vote, Our Victory Virtual Registration & Education Event" on September 18th hosted by The People's Community Baptist Church in Silver Spring
- "And Still I Vote" virtual forum on September 22nd hosted by Moving Us Forward, Inc.
- AARP Tele-Town Hall on September 24th
- #AskTheElectionOfficials Q&A sponsored by Twitter on Tuesday, October 6th
- AARP Tele-Town Hall on October 21st

Appendix A: MD Votes Campaign – Creative Assets and Media Buy

See the next page.

Thank you for the opportunity to share information about the on-going, statewide voter education and public outreach campaign. If you have any questions about this effort, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Linda H. lamme

Linda H. Lamone State Administrator



APPENDIX A: CAMPAIGN CREATIVE

Unified under the MD Votes banner, copy and graphics have been developed to be simple and direct, supporting the importance of voting and providing details on how to vote. With the challenges brought on by COVID-19, Marylanders have to unravel a myriad of messages and information to fully understand the nuances of registering and voting in the 2020 Presidential General Election. The campaign strives to provide relevant, actionable information and resources to make the process clear and to encourage participation. Many of the assets were produced both in English and Spanish.

Iconography

Our set of Icons tie to the local, state, and national patriotism that is inherent to the act of voting. Consistent application of the Icons throughout all paid and earned media, stakeholder engagement, and on the Board of Elections website landing page helps to unify the message and visually complement the information being provided.

An example of the Iconography being used throughout the campaign materials:



Register to vote



Request a ballot



Find a Vote Center

View all Icons

Television/Video :30

The first of two :30 video spots are focused on vote-by-mail, but also contains additional information for voters who prefer to vote in-person. The campaign graphics are animated to provide clear, direct messaging and to reinforce the campaign messages that Marylanders will likely have seen through other pieces of the campaign and Board of Elections communications.

:30 Television: Vote-By-Mail

Flight Dates: 9/13 – 10/13



Radio :30

Similar to TV and print, two radio spots have been produced. The first began running on September 14th and will run through October 13th and has a primary message of vote-by-mail. The second will begin running October 14th and will run through Election Day, November 3rd to encourage early in-person voting. Each spot was recorded with both male and female voice talent, and appropriate versions of the spot were trafficked to each station based on their audience demographic. The recordings are linked below. The same spots were produced in Spanish for the Latino audience.

Radio Spot 1: Vote-By-Mail Flight Dates: 9/14 – 10/13 <u>Female</u> <u>Male</u>

Radio Spot 2: Early Voting Flight Dates: 10/14 – 11/3 <u>Female</u> <u>Male</u>

Print Ads

Two print ads were produced for the MD Votes campaign and produced primarily in larger, 1/2-page sizes when possible due to the extent of information that needed to be communicated, as well as the impact made by larger size ads. The first ad, running through 10/13, focuses primarily on mail-in ballots, while the second that runs from 10/14 - 11/3 focuses on early voting. A sample of each is below. Both ads were also produced in Spanish.

Ad 1: Vote-By-Mail

Flight Dates 9/14 – 10/13



Ad 2: Vote Early Flight Dates 9/14 – 10/13



If you are voting by mail, return your completed ballot to a drop box by 8pm on November 3 or postmark by November 3. Spanish Ad 1: Vote-By-Mail Flight Dates: 9/14 – 10/13



Spanish Ad 2: Vote Early Flight Dates 9/14 – 10/13



Digital Ads

Our digital campaign is utilizing Google Search, Google Display, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube to reach a broad and diverse audience of eligible voters. Using a mix of text-based creative, static ads, responsive ads, GIFs and videos, the campaign is designed to optimize based on performance to garner visits to the SBE website for additional information. A sample of a social static ad for each segment of the campaign is below, with the full ad set linked from the titles.

Register to Vote:

Call to Action: Register Now Flight: 8/27 – 10/13



Request a Ballot:

Call to Action: Request Your Ballot Flight: 8/27 – 10/20



<u>Vote Early:</u> Call to Action: Find a Vote Center Flight: 10/21 - 11/3



Return Your Ballot:

Call to action: Find a Drop Box Flight: 10/5 - 11/3



Make Your Vote Count: (inactive / lapsed voters) Call to Action: Start Here Flight 9/10 - 10/13



General Ad Set:

Call to Action: Learn More Flight: 9/14 – 10/13



Spanish Language Ads:



MEDIA BUDGET

Paid Media Budget Allocation by Medium

% OF BUDGET		
35.46%		
14.23%		
19.15%		
31.17%		
100.00%		

Traditional Media Budget Allocation by Market

MARKET	% OF TRADITIONAL BUDGET
Baltimore	45.52%
Washington DC	35.71%
Salisbury/Eastern Shore	4.82%
Hagerstown/Frederick	4.78%
Cumberland	1.30%
Southern MD	1.70%
MD General	6.16%
TOTAL	100.00%

Digital Media Budget Allocation by Market

County Area:	Central	Eastern	Northern	Western	Southern
	Baltimore	Dorchester	Harford	Allegany	Montgomery
	Anne Arundel	Somerset	Cecil	Carroll	St. Mary's
	Howard	Wicomico		Washington	Calvert
	Baltimore City	Caroline		Frederick	Prince George's
		Kent		Garrett	Charles
		Queen Anne's			
		Talbot			
		Worcester			
Total Population:	2,351,417	353,679	358,296	678,157	2,278,619
Budget Allocation:	39%	6%	6%	11%	38%

**

Digital Media Allocations is documented for general campaigns (Register to Vote, Request a Ballot, Vote Early). Lapsed Voters and Return Your Ballot digital campaigns deliver to specific lists, and budget is not allocated by geography.

MEDIA BUY

Digital

Google Search, Google Display, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook

Television

<u>Baltimore:</u>WBAL, WBFF, WNUV, WJZ, WMAR, BounceTV, MPT <u>Washington DC:</u> WUSA, WRC, WJLA, WTTG <u>Salisbury/Eastern Shore:</u> WMDT, WEMT, GMDT, WBOC <u>Hagerstown</u>: WDVM

Maryland: Comcast

Radio

Baltimore: WBAL-AM, WIYY, WOLB, WWIN, WERQ, WZBA, WCBM-AM, WLIF, WMMX, WJZ, WEAA, WYPR, WCAO, WPOC, WQSR <u>Washington DC:</u> WTOP, WAMU, WMMJ, WHUR, WASH <u>Salisbury/Eastern Shore:</u> WWFG, WSBY, WQHQ <u>Hagerstown/Frederick:</u> WAYZ, WBHB, WLIN, WWEG, WFRE, WFMD <u>Cumberland:</u> WCBC-FM, WCBC-Am

Print

<u>Baltimore:</u> Baltimore Sun, Towson Times, Laurel Leader, Columbia Flyer, Howard County Times, Aegis, Capital Gazette, Cecil Whig

Washington DC: Washington Post

Southern Maryland: Southern Maryland News

Hagerstown: Hagerstown Mail

<u>Cumberland:</u> Cumberland Times, Garrett County Weekender

Salisbury/Eastern Shore: Salisbury Daily Times, Star Democrat

African American Focused Print: Afro Newspaper, Washington Informer

<u>Asian American Focused Print:</u> World Journal, Asian Fortune News, China Times, Saigon Broadcast Network, Korea Daily, AsAmNews, Mochi Magazine, Programmatic Digital