



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



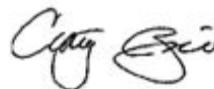
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Councilmember At-Large



Andrew Friedson
Councilmember District 1



Craig Rice
Councilmember District 2



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