



February 28, 2022

### An Open Letter to Michigan's State and Legislative Leaders:

In our role as election administrators, we are not focused on the wins or losses of political parties, but on the delivery of a service that our voters deserve. While this focus may cause us at times to disagree with political agendas on both sides – we believe that is in the best interest of our voters.

Election officials across our state are calling on state government leaders to step up to their responsibility of providing resources and policies to ensure a smooth 2022 election cycle. As we face another major election year with insufficient funding, continued high volume of absentee voting, and increased scrutiny due to the 2020 cycle, we need our leadership to focus on problem-solving rather than political wins and losses.

Administering the 2020 election was unlike any election in Michigan's history. An already over-extended and under-funded system was put to the test and strained to the measure of its capacity. Nearly everyone can agree that changes are necessary. Some of the needed changes are a result of the world we live in post 2020, and other changes have been neglected for far too long.

Time demands bipartisan enactment of positive enhancements to our electoral system. Countless hours have been spent discussing and debating bills, which have either stalled in legislative committees or been vetoed.

Consider the pressure on frontline election administrators: zero increase in state funding, no pre-processing of absentee ballots to ensure more timely and accurate tabulation and no substantive changes to address voter concerns. All of these shortcomings foster voter mistrust in the election process by which we select our leaders. Our objective continues: administer secure, accurate, transparent, and fair elections. Without the support of state leaders, we cannot fully achieve our objective.

Now is the time for state leaders in the executive and legislative branches to set aside their agendas and come together to consider reasonable improvements that will benefit our voters.

The 2022 election cycle is well underway, leaving precious little time to legislate and then implement improvements.

We propose the following commonsense solutions as a good starting point:

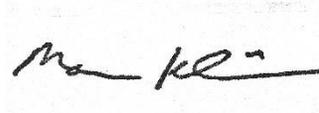
- Provide funding assistance for the staff and infrastructure (including drop box security and postage costs) needed to process an over 100% increase in the number of absentee ballots statewide since Proposal 18-3 and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Allow for the secure and transparent pre-processing of absentee ballots to provide accurate and timely election results. The model exists in 19 other states that currently process mail-in ballots prior to Election Day.
- Allow for a functional structure to offer early voting as an option for Michigan voters.
- Require both training and reasonable access for election challengers. Our voters benefit when informed citizens engage in election observation.
- Ensure the fullest transparency possible by requiring post-election audits to be public.
- Allow additional time for clerks to audit and certify our statewide primary election by moving the primary from August to June. This additional time gap is in line with 31 other states and will allow more time to program and proof ballots for the general election.
- Allow clerks to better clean Michigan's voter rolls by removing deceased voters more quickly, continuing to eliminate the records of voters who move out of state and requiring a mandatory cancellation of voters who have been flagged in the system following the requirements of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA).

Real leadership is demonstrated by being willing to reach across the partisan aisle and create solutions. There is no doubt that Americans are divided over the past election; but improvements that lead to better run elections have the power to lessen the tensions of mistrust and unite us in a common goal of accessible and secure elections. Our voters deserve a good faith effort by state leaders to make that happen.

Sincerely,



**Mary Clark, President**  
Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks  
Delta Township Clerk (Eaton County)



**Marc Kleiman, President**  
Michigan Association of County Clerks  
Menominee County Clerk/Register of Deeds