

June 29 2020

Honorable Laurel M. Lee  
Secretary of the State of Florida  
P. O. Box 6327  
Tallahassee, FL 32314

Cc: Governor Ron De Santis

Dear Secretary Lee,

We are writing to share our thoughts on your long delayed but welcome response to the letters sent to you by all the Supervisors of Elections (SOEs) in the state of Florida on April 7 and May 13, 2020. All 67 supervisors joined in the request for simple, commonsense procedures to ensure free, fair, and safe elections in August and November, as they face an expected record-high voter turnout in the middle of the deadly coronavirus pandemic, all during hurricane season.

We are dismayed at the length of time it took for the Governor to respond to such an urgent request. Although you did grant, belatedly, some of the actions the supervisors requested, you did not go far enough. We need the kind of fast, decisive action the state took during Hurricane Michael in 2018, when the threat to voting was immediately thwarted by executive order. We need an executive order now for additional early voting days and locations, and a public campaign that displays the measures the state has taken to keep voters and poll workers safe.

Per the requests of the SOEs to the Governor, you granted several asks, including earlier canvassing of mail-in ballots, expansion of early voting times and locations, the authorization of school closings and incentives for state workers to volunteer as poll workers, and the matching of PPE, sanitizer, and cleaning supplies expenses. This shows us that you recognize the challenges SOEs and poll workers face.

But a way to further ease that burden would be to allow for additional early voting days, a matter on which there is still no clear statewide directive. In the last presidential election, around 30% of registered Florida voters utilized their option to vote early. This year, that translates to millions of voters crowding into their polling locations in the middle of a highly contagious pandemic. The only hope we have of mitigating the damage would be to reduce the number of people using each location by adding more polling places, and to add more early voting days to reduce crowd density. Though we appreciate the need for individual

Supervisors to have the flexibility and latitude to address conditions within each county, the result may lead to less early voting opportunity in some parts of the state.

There is still much to be done to show Florida voters that it is safe for them to do their civic duty. Fear about exposure to COVID-19, long lines at our polling places, and recent online efforts to recruit hostile individuals to intimidate voters are all expected to reduce voter turnout. In other parts of the country, the latter two have been deemed voter suppression.

Floridians deserve safe and easy access to the polls. An Executive Order that extended early voting days and funded their expense, as requested by the SOEs, would amplify the message that our Governor and Secretary of State have taken every opportunity to ensure safe and effective Florida elections. This would both reduce the likelihood of long lines, and better ensure that those who show up to vote can properly practice social distancing, if it is still necessary at that time.

We need a public campaign announcing the measures that will be taken to keep poll workers and voters safe, both from COVID-19 and from anyone who would seek to drive away voters who may not hold their beliefs or support their candidates. Voters will not come out for elections unless they believe their polling location is safe from Covid-19 and intimidation tactics. This can only be achieved by a swift, decisive executive order from our governor.

Indivisible Groups signing onto this letter are:

Indivisible St Johns, 777 members, [indivisible.st.johns@gmail.com](mailto:indivisible.st.johns@gmail.com)

Indivisible Safety Harbor, membership 120 [charrie-m@live.com](mailto:charrie-m@live.com)

Beaches Activists Movement, 373 members, [beachesactivistmovement@gmail.com](mailto:beachesactivistmovement@gmail.com)

Broward for Progress, 1000 members, [browardforprogress@gmail.com](mailto:browardforprogress@gmail.com)

Indivisible Venice, membership 488 members, [Indivisiblepeoplefl17@gmail.com](mailto:Indivisiblepeoplefl17@gmail.com)

Indivisible Mandarin, 400 members, [ind.mandarin@gmail.com](mailto:ind.mandarin@gmail.com)

Indivisible FL-13, 420 members, [info@indivisibleFL13.com](mailto:info@indivisibleFL13.com)

Englewood Indivisible, 700 members, [EnglewoodIndivisible@gmail.com](mailto:EnglewoodIndivisible@gmail.com)

United for Action of Central Florida, 138 members, [kksutherla@aol.com](mailto:kksutherla@aol.com)

Indivisible Jax Riverside 204 members [riversideresistance@gmail.com](mailto:riversideresistance@gmail.com)

Indivisible Clay County, 200 members, [IndivisibleClayCo@gmail.com](mailto:IndivisibleClayCo@gmail.com)

Action Together Suncoast, 1556 members, [actiontogethersuncoast@gmail.com](mailto:actiontogethersuncoast@gmail.com)

Indivisible Action Southwest Florida, 400+ members, [IndivisibleActionSWFL@gmail.com](mailto:IndivisibleActionSWFL@gmail.com)

Sarasota Stands Together, 300 members, [SarasotaStandsTogether@gmail.com](mailto:SarasotaStandsTogether@gmail.com)

Palm Beach Indivisibles, 1000 members, [NNInfoPBIN@gmail.com](mailto:NNInfoPBIN@gmail.com)

**Sources:**

1. <https://countyballotfiles.elections.myflorida.com/FVRSCountyBallotReports/AbsenteeEarlyVotingReports/PublicStats>
2. <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/data-statistics/voter-registration-statistics/voter-registration-reportsxlsx/voter-registration-by-party-affiliation/by-party-affiliation-archive/>
3. <https://dos.myflorida.com/media/697363/early-voting-and-vote-by-mail-report-2016-gen.pdf>
4. <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/data-statistics/voter-registration-statistics/voter-registration-reportsxlsx/voter-registration-by-party-affiliation/>
5. <https://www.aclu.org/news/civil-liberties/block-the-vote-voter-suppression-in-2020/>

Around 10% of Florida voters have already gotten a VBM ballot for 2020. (1, 4)

According to the ACLU, “Across the country, counties with larger minority populations have fewer polling sites and poll workers per voter.” (5)

In the last presidential election, around 30% of Florida voters voted early. (2, 3)