

April 7, 2020

Re: Wisconsin election meltdown demands congressional action to protect voters from COVID-19

Dear Representative:

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) writes again to strongly urge you to include in the next stimulus legislation specific provisions to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the 2020 elections. The failure of Congress to act to protect our elections is simply not an option. *As has been recently demonstrated in Ohio, Florida, Texas, and, today, in Wisconsin, states and counties are unprepared to address the seismic shift in election administration necessary to ensure the 2020 primaries and election can proceed safely during the pandemic, without diminishing the fundamental right to vote.*



National Political
Advocacy Department
915 15th St. NW, 6th FL
Washington, D.C. 20005
aclu.org

Susan Herman
President

Anthony Romero
Executive Director

Ronald Newman
National Political
Director

The ACLU wrote on [March 20](#)¹ and again on [March 22](#)² expressing the urgent need for both federal authorizing legislation and an investment of federal funding. We recommend legislation include:

- 1. A federal requirement that all states offer no-excuse mail-in absentee voting to every eligible voter.**
- 2. A federal requirement that all states institute a minimum early voting period of 14 days, including at least one Saturday and one Sunday.**
- 3. \$4 billion in federal funding made available immediately to states, counties, and municipalities.**
- 4. An additional \$4 million to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission for increased administration and additional state support.**

Congress appropriated \$400 million in the previous stimulus package for election security grants. It is simply not enough—it also requires a problematic 20% state match—and additional federal funding must come quickly. Additionally, federal requirements for no-excuse mail-in absentee voting and early in-person voting are *necessary* to preempt state laws that may prohibit states from advancing these remedies for their voters – many legislatures have already adjourned for the year, and it will be difficult or impossible to convene emergency legislative sessions during the pandemic.

¹ <https://www.aclu.org/letter/aclu-letter-urging-covid-19-election-legislation>.

² <https://www.aclu.org/letter/aclu-follow-letter-urging-covid-19-voting-legislation-3222020>.

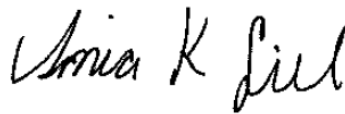
It is imperative that Congress act swiftly so state officials can begin preparing *now* to address the exponential surge in absentee voting, staffing demands, and necessary technological upgrades. Supplies—including software, printers, ballot paper, envelopes, tabulators, voting machines, pens, and letter openers to accommodate far more mail-in ballots than historically have been submitted—must be ordered immediately. Supply vendors will need ample time to ramp up production to meet the expected surge in demand for their products. Training programs for a new contingent of election workers must be developed and executed so in-person voting, including expanded early voting, can proceed safely. Congress must act now to ensure elections proceed and Americans can vote safely.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact ACLU Legislative Counsel Sonia Gill at sgill@aclu.org or (917) 334-1545.

Sincerely,



Ronald Newman
National Political Director
National Political Advocacy Department



Sonia Gill
Senior Legislative Counsel
National Political Advocacy Department