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July 30, 2020

Chairman Richard Shelby  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate

Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate

Dear Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairman Leahy,

We, the undersigned, are members of Issue One's bipartisan ReFormers Caucus — a group of approximately 200 former members of Congress, Cabinet officials, and governors united around our common mission to fix our broken political system. We write you today to request your support in securing our elections by appropriating adequate emergency funding for states and localities as they face mounting, unanticipated costs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of our democratic system of government. Throughout the Civil War, the Spanish Flu, and both World Wars, our country has successfully and peacefully held our elections despite ongoing conflict and hardship. Now, at a time when our nation is facing a dual economic and public health crisis, Congress must act to ensure state and local election officials have what they need to carry out a safe and credible election process that Americans have confidence in. Failure to deliver adequate resources for the November general elections —whether states and localities decide to invest in absentee ballots, more early voting, personal protective equipment, or recruitment of younger poll workers — will risk more chaos and confusion on Election Day, and will, ultimately, sow doubt in this sacred democratic process.

As you are aware, state and local election officials from across the country have [been vocal](#) about the need for additional funding with few strings attached, including the burdensome 20% state match requirement. In fact, one [recent report](#) found that five key states have less than 18% of the funding they need for a successful November election. These state and local officials are working every day to make sure every eligible voter can safely cast their ballot, and Congress needs to allocate adequate funds to ensure they can do their jobs effectively.

We are less than 14 weeks away from Election Day. The recent primary contests in Wisconsin, Georgia, New York, and elsewhere should serve as a lesson and compel Congress to act immediately in order to secure our elections with additional emergency funding via the Election Assistance Commission.



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**If we fail to ensure a safe and orderly election while the novel coronavirus continues to spread, we risk sending a message to the world that says we cannot protect ourselves.**

Thank you for your careful review and consideration.

Sincerely,

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Rep. Chet Atkins (D-MA)  
Rep. Les AuCoin (D-OR)  
Sec. Bruce Babbitt (D-AZ)  
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Rep. Mike Barnes (D-MD)  
Rep. Gresham Barrett (R-SC)  
Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX)  
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Rep. Doug Bereuter (R-NE)  
Rep. Brian Bilbray (R-CA)  
Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM)  
Gov. James Blanchard (D-MI)  
Rep. Sherry Boehlert (R-NY)  
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Rep. Jack Buechner (R-MO)  
Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO)  
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Rep. Sam Coppersmith (D-AZ)  
Rep. Jerry Costello (D-IL)  
Sen. Jack Danforth (R-MO)  
Rep. Buddy Darden (D-GA)  
Sen. Tom Daschle (D-SD)  
Rep. Tom Davis (R-VA)  
Rep. Lincoln Davis (D-TN)  
Rep. Jim Davis (D-FL)  
Rep. Charlie Dent (R-PA)  
Rep. Charles Djou (R-HI)  
Sen. Chris Dodd (D-CT)  
Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-IN)  
Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-ND)  
Rep. Tom Downey (D-NY)  
Gov. Michael Dukakis (D-MA)  
Sen. Dave Durenberger (R-MN)  
Rep. Dave Emery (R-ME)  
Rep. Karan English (D-AZ)  
Rep. Elizabeth Esty (D-CT)  
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Sen. Russ Feingold (D-WI)  
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Gov. Bob Wise (D-WV)  
Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-CA)  
Rep. Bill Zeliff (R-NH)

**Cc: Members of the Committee on Appropriations**