



KATIE HOBBS
SECRETARY OF STATE
State of Arizona

March 18, 2020

Senate President Karen Fann
Democratic Leader David Bradley
House Speaker Rusty Bowers
Democratic Leader Charlene Fernandez

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Dear Senate President Fann, Democratic Leader Bradley, House Speaker Bowers, and Democratic Leader Fernandez:

Over the course of the past several weeks, elections officials throughout Arizona have worked under extraordinary conditions to put on a fair, free, and safe Presidential Preference Election amid a public health emergency. They have performed admirably and, particularly given the circumstances, are owed a debt of gratitude from the people of Arizona. I'm proud to serve alongside such competent professionals who have remained steadfast in their duty, putting professionalism ahead of panic.

That said, it would be unreasonable to ask these officials to once again overcome these circumstances, should they still exist or are exacerbated, for the August and November elections. Health experts have said it could be months before the risk of infection subsides, with the possibility of a new outbreak after the summer months. We need to prepare now for any eventuality. Before the legislature adjourns, it is vital that we build more flexibility into the law—even if only on a temporary basis—to allow elections officials to adapt to the circumstances on the ground to best protect voters' health while also preserving the ability to exercise their right to vote. To accomplish this, County Boards of Supervisors should have the authority to conduct an all-mail election, at least for the 2020 Primary and General Elections.

Arizona law already allows for jurisdictional elections (e.g., a citywide or school district election) to be conducted in this manner. Under these circumstances and the current uncertainty we face, allowing for all-mail elections would enable counties to conduct fair and secure elections and ensure that voters can safely vote despite an ongoing public health emergency. Legislation that can accomplish this has been introduced this session, and elections officials from across the state are prepared to discuss how to implement all-mail elections in a way that ensures that those without access to regular mail delivery are not disenfranchised. Given that tribal members have historically faced barriers to voting by mail, it is important that tribal leaders are also part of this conversation.

1700 West Washington Street, Floor 7
Phoenix, Arizona 85007-2808
Telephone (602) 542-4285 Fax (602) 542-1575
www.azsos.gov

Page 1 of 2

My Office is also evaluating additional election-related issues that may warrant immediate legislation under the current circumstances to protect the public, candidates, campaigns, and State and county elections staff given this developing national emergency. I will share additional proposals as quickly as possible but wanted to immediately convey the importance of the need for an all-mail option for the 2020 Primary and General Elections. Thank you very much for your attention to these important matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'KH' followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Katie Hobbs
Secretary of State