



## News Release

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### **CED Calls for Immediate Action to Support an Accessible, Fair and Reliable November 2020 Election**

**Washington, DC, June 15, 2020...** With time running short, CED today released the following statement calling for immediate action to support an accessible, fair, and reliable November 2020 Election.

The COVID-19 pandemic is wreaking havoc on campaigns, party conventions, and the most sacred of democratic principles—the ability to vote. Policymakers and election officials must act now to ensure that COVID-19 is not a deterrent to participation and that the election offers an accessible and credible way for eligible voters to make themselves heard.

CED calls on Congress to immediately provide the necessary funding to states and localities to ensure they can implement the procurement, training, and adjustments needed to conduct a safe, accessible, and credible election.

With the support of federal funding, commonsense options already practiced in many parts of the country should be implemented:

During a continuing public health emergency, all would-be voters must be able to easily obtain and cast a postage-paid mail-in ballot and policymakers must make sure there are enough ballots to meet the expected increase in demand. All states should allow easy access voting by mail without requiring any justification on the part of the voter. No excuse necessary early voting is already



offered by two-thirds of the states. Minimizing the in-person contact required to vote is the strongest possible safeguard for the health of voters and poll workers.

Significant periods of early voting—at least partially offered by most states—would allow safer, less trafficked polling places on election day and guarantee that eligible voters can safely make their choices count. Every state should offer *at least* 10 days of early voting, including weekends and evenings.

Election officials must ensure that poll workers, voters, and their communities have the protective equipment, supplies, and training they need to keep polling places safe.

Ensuring a credible election —one that builds rather than degrades trust in the outcome—requires preparation, training, and education. Challenges in recent primary elections have further illustrated the importance of early action now to ensure a trustworthy process. More trained personnel will be needed to make sure the mail-in votes are counted in a timely and trusted manner and measures for transparency in the mail balloting process will further engender trust.

Americans demand integrity in their election results even under extraordinary circumstances and these are extraordinary times in our nation’s history. That should motivate bipartisan support in Congress for investments that ensure that credibility without making it more difficult for eligible voters to safely access the ballot.

With the pandemic draining state and local finances, only Congress can provide the necessary funding. Skimping on preparing for full and safe participation is a false economy the US cannot afford.

As trusted voices in their communities, business leaders can also play a critical role.



They can provide needed infrastructure and technology assistance pro bono (as several businesses have already done since 2016) and also reach out to help voters—especially their employees and customers—understand all the options for voting while remaining safe.

Further, they can create reminders and provide opportunities for their own employees to vote early, reducing their communities' risks and pressures on Election Day and offer flexible policies for voting on Election Day, itself.

Time is of the essence for action to protect the health of our democracy. This will take a concerted effort on the part of federal, state, and local officials and leaders. But Washington, acting together across party lines, must first lead the way.

*For more on CED's position on the conduct and funding of the 2020 election, see CED Trustees Ron Klein's and Bob Kueppers' May 1, 2020 op-ed: [Don't Make Americans Choose Between Voting and Their Health](#); also, listen to the CED Podcast, [Preparing for the 2020 Election Amid COVID-19](#).*

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