

Representative Nellie Unangiq Jimmie
Alaska State Legislature - House District 38

Session Contact

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October 28, 2026

Via Email

Carol Beecher, Director
Alaska Division of Elections

The Honorable Nancy Dahlstrom
Lieutenant Governor of Alaska

Re: Immediate Action Required: Rural Alaska Early and Absentee Voting Site Closures

Dear Director Beecher and Lieutenant Governor Dahlstrom:

I write to express my profound frustration and serious concern regarding ongoing failures affecting early and absentee in-person voting in rural Alaska. I request an immediate written response from the Division of Elections detailing corrective actions to address polling-place closures, inaccurate public information, and barriers to voting.

Yesterday, October 27, reports indicated that at least 17 early and absentee voting locations statewide are not open, including seven or more in House District 38 (Mertarvik; Kongiganak; Tununak; Tuluksak; Toksook Bay; Nunapitchuk; Akiak). Today, October 28, at least 14 statewide are not open, including 6 or more in House District 38 (Napaskiak; Tuntutuliak; Toksook Bay; Tuluksak; Tununak; Chevak). Several more communities could not be reached. We have also received reports of insufficient training and instruction by Division of Election staff, incorrect locations listed on the Division of Election website, and hours of availability inconsistent with those advertised.

Voters must be able to rely on the Division's published information, particularly in remote communities where alternatives may be limited.

This situation is especially troubling given similar problems during the August primary. On August 20, I wrote regarding the late opening of the Nunapitchuk precinct on August 18 and concerns about absentee ballots that did not reach Bethel in time to be counted. My questions about voter recourse, documentation of affected turnout, and corrective measures were not adequately answered. The recurrence of these issues raises serious questions about what the Division learned from the primary and what has changed since.

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I request written responses addressing the following:

1. **Immediate corrective action:** What is being done to restore voting services at affected locations, and what are the timelines for resolution?
2. **Accurate public information:** How will the Division verify that locations are open, promptly update its website, and notify voters of closures or changes in hours?
3. **Voter recourse:** What options are available to voters whose opportunity to vote has been reduced or disrupted by a closure or delayed opening?
4. **Documentation and accountability:** Will the Division maintain a community-by-community record of disruptions and corrective actions, and flag or footnote relevant turnout data in certified results or accompanying documentation?

I am also concerned that, in response to my previous correspondence, I was asked to assist the Division in recruiting poll workers for Nunapitchuk and across the region. While adequate staffing is essential, responsibility for ensuring election operations are properly staffed rests with the Division and its established election administration partners. Asking individuals who have raised concerns about election administration to help resolve staffing deficiencies raises questions about the appropriate separation of responsibilities. I request clarification on how the Division is addressing these needs through its own administrative processes, as opposed to asking those running for office to do so.

Rural Alaskans should not bear the burden of discovering that advertised voting locations are closed or inaccurate, particularly when travel and communication options are limited. The right to vote must be meaningful in practice, and recurring disruptions require more than assurances that individual problems will be addressed.

I therefore request a prompt written response to these questions and an immediate corrective action plan covering affected communities statewide. Given that early voting is underway and Election Day is November 3, the Division must identify the steps being taken now, publish verified location information, and provide clear instructions for voters affected by disruptions.

A statewide problem requires a statewide accounting and a coordinated solution. I look forward to your prompt and substantive response.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nellie Unangiq Jimmie".

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