



August 22, 2020

Speaker Bob Cupp  
President Larry Obhof  
Minority Leader Emilia Sykes  
Minority Leader Kenny Yuko

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear esteemed leaders of the Ohio General Assembly:

On behalf of Ohio's 88 county boards of elections, we write to urge your support for Secretary of State Frank LaRose's Controlling Board request to prepay return postage for absentee ballots for the November election.

We know that you are hearing from your local boards of elections about the numerous difficulties we are encountering in preparing for this unique and challenging election. Recruiting and training precinct election officials, securing PPE, and adapting our polling locations to allow for social distancing are just a few of the issues boards are struggling with right now. Against this backdrop is the looming realization that many, many Ohioans want and expect the ability to cast an absentee ballot by mail. In fact, we are encouraging voters to do this, as it alleviates many of the other concerns we have cited.

We urge you to consider:

- The request uses fees generated by the Secretary of State's office. It does not spend a dollar of state or federal general revenue fund money.
- Local boards of elections are prohibited by Ohio law from prepaying return postage. ONLY the Secretary of State can provide this service with the blessing of the General Assembly.
- The legislature thoughtfully and rightfully prepaid postage for the primary election. You did this in response to the unique circumstances created by the pandemic. That pandemic continues, as do the challenges to the election system that it has created.
- Encouraging voters to cast their ballots through the mail reduces lines on Election Day and makes social distancing easier to accomplish for those who wish to vote in-person, thereby creating a win-win for all voters.

Ohio's bipartisan election professionals, those whom you have worked with and entrusted to administer our elections, implore you to give favorable consideration to this request. Working together the Legislature, the Secretary of State and the local boards of elections can overcome

the challenges presented by COVID-19 and continue Ohio's long track record of conducting fair, accurate and honest elections.

Sincerely,



Michelle L. Wilcox, President  
Ohio Association of Election Officials  
(419) 234-0678



Lisa Welch, First-Vice President  
Ohio Association of Election Officials  
(330) 231-1900

CC:     Senator Jay Hottinger  
          Senator Bob Peterson  
          Senator Vernon Sykes  
          Representative Scott Oelslager  
          Representative Shane Wilkin  
          Representative Jack Cera  
          President Fletch Zimpher