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Chairman, Board of Supervisors

Statement on Fairfax County Voter Lines and Satellite Voting Locations

We have seen incredible turnout for in-person absentee voting, which is very exciting. As an elected official, I am committed to making sure that every Fairfax County voter feels safe and secure in knowing their ballot will be counted.

The Board of Supervisors prioritized increased funding to the Office of Elections to help meet expected demand. In the FY2021 budget, the Board approved an increase of \$500,000 and an additional increase of \$1.14 million as part of the FY2020 Carryover. Funding will support the staffing necessary to process absentee ballots and to staff voting locations, the purchase of ballots and registration notices, and supplies for polling and satellite locations.

For 30 years, the Electoral Board, not the Board of Supervisors, has made the decision to open satellite locations the Wednesday following the deadline to register to vote. This is intentional to avoid confusion at the polls. In the past, and as our poll workers have seen at our Government Center location this year, many voters show up to polling locations without properly registering. If you look to our neighboring jurisdictions, you will find that this is still the standard practice and that we ultimately will have substantially more early voting locations than other counties.

This year, the Office of the Elections and the Electoral Board increased satellite locations. On October 14, 14 additional voting locations will open, which is a significant increase from the 9 satellite locations in 2016. To maximize their budget, they determined the best approach to voting locations for a county of our size was to have more locations open for a shorter period of time. This approach increases the presence of satellite locations into neighborhoods, closer to where people live. This was a decision made to make voting more accessible for the entire County. Please note that this is about 1 voting location per 51,000 registered voters.

At this point in time, we cannot add more voting locations. Fairfax County is restricted by the Code of Virginia from establishing any additional satellite voting locations, as the state requires jurisdictions to inform voters of these locations no later than 55 days before the General Election.

Beyond satellite locations, I want to continue to reiterate that there are many options to help voters avoid long lines. Voters may request a mail-in ballot until October 23rd. This mail-in ballot can be mailed or dropped off at any of the satellite locations and General Registrar's Office. Of course, you may also vote in-person on November 3rd. In fact, there have never been more ways to vote in Fairfax County and Virginia this election year.

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