



October 6, 2020

The Honorable Laurel Lee, Secretary of State
 Florida Department of State
 R.A. Gray Building
 500 South Bronough Street
 Tallahassee, FL 32399

The Honorable Ron DeSantis, Governor of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor DeSantis, and Secretary Lee,

Florida's Online Voter Registration ("OVR") system was plagued with serious problems for hours on Monday, October 5, 2020, making it impossible for prospective voters to register to vote on the final day of voter registration for the November 3, 2020 general election. We demand that the deadline for voter registration be extended two days to 11:59 p.m., October 7th, 2020.

These problems are akin to what voters experienced in advance of the August primary and November general voter registration deadlines during the 2018 election cycle. Florida's online voter registration system has unfortunately broken repeatedly at precisely the moment it is needed most - the high volume days just before the voter registration deadline, or in this case, just hours before the book closing deadline.

Our OVR system had [problems](#) shortly before the book closing deadline for the August primary in 2018, when voters were unable to register due to an [error](#) in the coding of the site, and again in the lead up to the book closing deadline for the November election where many [problems](#) were reported. There were again reports of the online registration site having [problems](#) in late March of this year, at a time where there was not a surge in usage.

Since September 2017, multiple organizations have asked state officials about the security and stability of the OVR system. All Voting is Local and other voting rights groups have been seeking information about previous problems from your office for years and have been asking your office for months to have an independent entity run a stress test of the OVR system in order to ensure that it would be able to handle an influx of last-minute registrations. These organizations have not been provided with ample answers, nor to our knowledge have state officials conducted the requested stress test.

It is critical that voters have every opportunity to register to vote in an easy and timely manner. This is particularly important in a presidential election year when the COVID-19 pandemic has made the opportunity for safe, contactless voter registration all the more critical. We respectfully request that your office immediately take the following steps:

- 1) Extend the book closing deadline to 11:59 p.m. on October 7, 2020 in all 67 Florida counties, permitting voters to submit registration applications online and on paper, including at Supervisors of Elections offices, driver's license offices, all NVRA agencies, and any other site that offers voter registration services.
- 2) Extend the days and hours that your office's technical support hotline for voters remains open until 11:59 p.m. on October 7, 2020, so that voters may obtain assistance with submitting a registration application or updating their registration online. Hotline operators should be available to answer questions from voters in both English and Spanish.
- 3) Communicate to voters through social media, television, and radio public service announcements (PSAs), the press, and through other channels about their right to register to vote until October 7, 2020 at 11:59pm, both online and at any public office that offers voter registration services, including those that are not in their home county. This outreach should be conducted in English and in Spanish.

Florida's voters deserve to have their voices heard in this and every election. Most importantly, they deserve a smooth registration process to ensure they can cast a ballot. To ensure their safety and that they can be certain they have a voice in this election, it is imperative that your office give voters across the state more time to register to vote, no matter where they live, ensuring voters in all counties have fair and equitable access to the ballot.

The right to vote is enshrined in the U.S. Constitution and serves as the bedrock of our democracy. Defending that right is the most essential responsibility of any public official. It's time for your office to fulfill this responsibility and protect Floridians' right to vote.

Sincerely,

All Voting is Local
ACLU of Florida
Alianza for Progress
Bring it Home Florida
Common Cause Florida
Campaign Legal Center
Disability Rights Florida
Fair Elections Center
Florida AFL-CIO
Florida Civic Engagement Table
Florida Conservation Voters
Florida For All

Florida Healthy Voices
Florida Immigrant Coalition
For Our Future Action Fund
La Mesa Boricua
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
League of Women Voters of Florida
Miami Freedom Project
Mi Familia Vota
NAACP Florida State Conference
NAACP Legal Defense Fund (LDF)
New Florida Majority
Opportunity for All Floridians
Poder Latinx
Respeta Mi Gente Coalition
SEIU Florida
SiX
SPLC Action Fund
The Common Ground Project
The Florida Immigrant Coalition
Unidos US
Vamos4PR
Voces Unidas por la Educación
Women Talk Black