



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY**  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

July 21, 2020

Governor Larry Hogan  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan:

We are writing to you to express our great concern over your decision on how to administer the 2020 general elections in November. While the primary election was not perfect, we should build on the lessons we learned from it instead of starting from scratch. Instead, your decision on the general election creates unnecessary health risks, voter confusion, and increases cost. We urge you to immediately reverse your decision and remove barriers that discourage voters from participating in the upcoming elections.

We support a hybrid vote-by-mail election that includes ballots mailed directly to voters, as recommended by the Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO). Since 1963, MAEO has represented the local election officials and Election Boards from all 24 jurisdictions. We believe the organization's recommendations reflect a statewide consensus from our local boards of election.

It is true that problems occurred in the June 2 Primary election—some ballots arrived late in Montgomery County, and there were other issues reported in other jurisdictions. While frustrating, we believe that SBE can learn from these challenges and overcome them.

Like MAEO, we also agree that requiring elections staff to process applications in addition to ballots will increase the health risks they face at work. Adding new steps to this process will increase voter confusion, increase the number of voters impacted by mail delivery delays, and increase the overall costs of implementation, without substantial public benefit. We also believe that requiring an application to be mailed back is unnecessary. The extra steps involved will increase voter confusion—especially for infrequent voters, elderly voters and those who do not speak English as a first language.

Surveys show that there is already a high degree of public anxiety about our elections due to COVID-19. Substantially changing the process from the primary election to the general election in the same year will further exacerbate these fears and undermine confidence.

As a national leader, you responded to the challenge that COVID-19 posed to our election by enacting mail-in voting during the primary. We urge you to continue on that path and amend your 2020 general elections directive by eliminating the application requirement and fully implementing a mail-in election.

It is a fundamental government responsibility to ensure that every voter can cast their ballot. We are counting on you to ensure that the plan for Maryland's 2020 General Election fulfills that important responsibility.

Sincerely,



Sidney Katz  
President



Tom Hucker  
Vice President



Gabe Albornoz  
Councilmember At-Large




Evan Glass  
Councilmember At-Large



Will Jawando  
Councilmember At-Large



Hans Riemer  
Councilmember At-Large



Andrew Friedson  
Councilmember District 1



Craig Rice  
Councilmember District 2



Nancy Navarro  
Councilmember District 4