

# Recommendations to Address Election-Related Effects of COVID-19



**NORTH CAROLINA**  
STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

April 7, 2020

# Immediate Response

- Public statement (3/12/2020)
- Numbered Memo 2020-11 (3/15/2020)
- Emergency Powers Rule Amendment (effective 3/20/2020)
- Joint Elections Infrastructure Working Group
- National Association of State Election Directors weekly meeting
- NC Task Force on Elections & COVID-19 Response
- Consult with State Emergency Response Team, federal partners, and SBE members
- Dedicated Webpage: [ncsbe.gov/coronavirus](https://ncsbe.gov/coronavirus)

# Short-Term Response

- Executive Order (3/20/2020)
  - Postponed 11<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Republican Second Primary to June 23, 2020
  - Protest proceedings stayed until May 20, 2020
  - Voting data by precinct extended
  - Suspended absentee request form drop off log
- Online Voter Registration Application launched in partnership with NCDMV (3/30/2020)



# Long-Term Response

- Can or should we move to all-mail balloting?
  - Infrastructure demands
  - Legislative changes
  - Guidance from all-mail states
- Beyond all-mail balloting
  - Outside the box solutions
  - Basic improvements
  - Funding and other assistance
  - Legislative recommendations



# Legislative Recommendations

- Expand options for absentee requests
- Establish online portal for absentee requests
- HAVA document allowed with absentee request form
- Pre-paid postage for returned absentee ballots
- Reduce or eliminate the witness requirement
- Modify procedure for counting ballots on Election Day
- Temporarily modify restrictions on assistance in care facilities
- Clarify authorization for telephonic meetings

# Legislative Recommendations (cont.)

- Expand student poll worker program
- Make Election Day a holiday
- Increase poll worker pay
- Eliminate requirement that a majority of poll workers reside in precinct
- Temporarily suspend purchase and contract requirements
- Match HAVA funds (*CARES Act funds now also available*)
- Flexibility in conducting one-stop early voting

# Federal Grants

- HAVA Grant (*authorized late December 2019*)
  - Federal share: \$11,625,810; State share: \$2,324,962; TOTAL: \$13,949,772
  - Categories
    - Voting equipment replacement and upgrades
    - Election auditing
    - Voter registration systems and management
    - Cyber vulnerabilities
    - Training
    - Communication
    - Additional categories requested by States
  - May be used for COVID-19:
    - Cleaning supplies and protective masks for staff and pollworkers, resources to meet an unanticipated increased demand for mail ballots due to self-isolation and quarantine in response to COVID19, and temporary staff to process the increased absentee ballot demand.
    - Funds may also be used for costs incurred to communicate law changes that could result from the pandemic.

# Federal Grants

- CARES Act Grant (*effective March 28, 2020*)
  - Federal share: \$10,897,295; State share within 2 years: \$2,179,459
  - TOTAL: \$13,076,753
  - Categories
    - Increase the ability to vote by mail
    - Expand early voting and online registration
    - Improve the safety of voting in-person by providing additional voting facilities and more poll workers



# Questions and Contact Information

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