

Dear Gov. Scott and Secretary Condos,

We appreciate your efforts to prioritize the health and wellbeing of Vermont's people at this difficult time. As organizations and businesses who share your interest in safeguarding the public, we write today to encourage you to take immediate steps to implement safe and secure elections in 2020.

It is our belief that no one should have to choose between staying safe and exercising their right to vote. Yet, we know that in-person voting during a pandemic can be dangerous for voters and poll workers alike. This is especially true if large numbers of voters choose to vote in-person.

Therefore, we believe that the responsible choice for this year's elections is to adopt a vote-by-mail system so that every registered voter in Vermont receives a ballot through the mail. This is the best way to maximize the safest possible means of voting this year – voting from home.

More than a thousand Vermonters have already signed on to the attached **PETITION** urging you to 1) Adopt a vote-by-mail system this year, 2) Preserve safe, in-person voting options, and 3) Conduct a broad public education and outreach program to maximize successful participation in the mail-in program.

As organizations and businesses with members and customers around the state, we stand ready to assist in getting the word out about the importance of voting by mail this year.

We thank you for considering this petition as you investigate the best options for Vermont. We hope you will agree that a universal vote-by-mail approach is the best way to ensure safe and secure elections this year.

Sincerely,

Paul Burns Executive Director VPIRG

Joey Bergstein Chief Executive Officer Seventh Generation

Jen Duggan Vice President and Director Conservation Law Foundation Vermont

Jordan Giaconia Public Policy Manager Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility

Lauren Hierl Executive Director Vermont Conservation Voters

Mark Hughes Executive Director Justice for All Vermont

Matthew McCarthy Chief Executive Officer Ben & Jerry's Homemade, Inc.

Kiah Morris Movement Politics Director Rights and Democracy VT

Morgan Nichols State Director The Main Street Alliance of Vermont

Ed Paquin Executive Director Disability Rights Vermont

Dan Quinlan Chair Vermont Climate and Health Alliance

Sue Racanelli President League of Women Voters of Vermont

Falko Schilling Advocacy Director ACLU of Vermont

Jenn Swain Global Senior Sustainability Manager Burton Snowboards

To Secretary of State Jim Condos and Gov. Phil Scott:

No one should have to choose between protecting their health and exercising their right to vote. Since there is no way to know what the COVID-19 threat will be for the rest of 2020, it is critically important that we act now to make voting this year as safe and convenient as possible for all Vermonters.

As Governor and Secretary of State, you have the authority to take the steps necessary to protect voters, poll workers and our elections system. Therefore, we urge you to commit to the following:

1. Mail Every Voter a Ballot Thousands of voters in Vermont have been casting their absentee ballots from home for years without difficulty. So, the idea of voting from home is not new here. But now, in order to keep voters safe, we need to maximize the process. Every eligible voter in Vermont should automatically receive a ballot before upcoming elections so they can vote-by-mail.

2. Make safe in-person voting available While we should do all that we can to encourage Vermonters to vote-by-mail, it's important that options remain available for safe, in-person voting as well. This is particularly important for people with disabilities, younger voters, people of color, those who may have unstable housing, and new Americans.
3. Expand voter education and outreach Our goal should be to maximize successful voter participation while making all voters and election workers feel safe. Since voting by mail will be a new experience for at least 70 percent of Vermont voters, it's critically important for state officials to work collaboratively on public education and outreach efforts with partners on the ground in communities around the state.