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July 20, 2020

Honorable Harvey Peeler, Jr.  
President  
S. C. Senate  
P.O. Box 142  
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

Honorable Jay Lucas  
Speaker  
S. C. House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 11867  
Columbia, SC 29202

Dear Senator Peeler and Speaker Lucas:

We write to express our very strong support for State Election Commission Director Marci Andino's letter of July 17, 2020. We concur entirely in both her assessment of the dangers that the November election faces and her recommended measures to mitigate those challenges. The pandemic that was the occasion of changes in June has not abated and cannot be expected to do so by November.

As Director Andino observes, current law requires the majority of SC voters and the workers who assist them to congregate in large numbers in confined spaces on a single day. This is contrary to the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), which recommends a wide array of election options for voters to protect the health of workers, voters, and all who come into contact with them. An unchanged election process would represent a grave and an unnecessary challenge to efforts to restore normalcy in South Carolina, risking "super-spreader events" that could adversely affect businesses, schools, and other basic social functions.

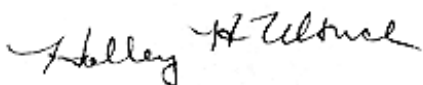
We specifically ask you to:

- Reinstatement of the "state of emergency" reason allowing every voter the option to vote absentee, choosing absentee-by-mail, early in person, or election day voting.
- Allow voters to apply for an absentee ballot online.
- Remove the witness requirement for absentee return envelopes.
- Allow use of drop boxes for return of absentee ballots.
- Provide election officials with more time to process absentee-by-mail ballots or extend the date by which counties must certify the results of the election.
- Allow curbside voting to take place at designated locations instead of every polling place.

We also support careful consideration of the additional solutions that were outlined by Director Andino.

We very much appreciate your successful efforts to make the June primaries and runoffs safe and secure. We are very grateful for that. We hope that you will take action as soon as possible to make equally sound decisions in time for the November elections, ensuring time for our hardworking election officials to prepare for safe, accessible, and secure elections.

Sincerely yours,



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cc: Marci Andino, Executive Director, SEC  
Governor Henry McMaster  
Senator Shane Massey, Senate Majority Leader  
Senator Nikki G. Setzler, Senate Minority Leader  
Senator Luke Rankin, Chair, Senate Judiciary  
Representative Thomas E. Pope, House Speaker Pro Tempore  
Representative J. Gary Simrill, House Majority Leader  
Representative J. Todd Rutherford, House Minority Leader  
Representative Mandy Powers Norrell, First Vice Chair, House Judiciary  
Representative G. Murrell Smith, Jr., Chair House Ways and Means  
John Wells, Chair, State Election Commission