



July 19, 2020

The Honorable Alex Padilla California Secretary of State
1500 11th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Systematic Disenfranchisement of Black and Brown Communities

Honorable Secretary Padilla,

Our community needs your help! The California General Election will be taking place on November 3rd and we have to ensure that we take every precaution to minimize some of these nightmare scenarios that we and other states faced during Primary Elections. My greatest concern is for low income black and brown communities, such as South Los Angeles. South L.A was dealt with a huge injustice during the March 3rd primary election. Residents who attempted to cast their votes at polling locations were met with closure of historical voting locations, crowded polling sites, lack of translation services, and some voters had to stand in lines between 4-6 hours just to cast their vote. **THIS IS TEXT-BOOK VOTER SUPPRESSION.** It is unacceptable and we can never allow this to happen again.

Secretary Padilla, we need your help in demanding L.A County to:

- Increase number of polling locations on election day to reduce overcrowding and the threat of massive exposure to Covid-19, this will help with high volume of voters on election day so that voting may take place within a reasonable waiting period (to avoid voters standing in long lines).
- Mandate that voting take place outdoors when possible to minimize Covid-19 exposure. Ideally contracting with local community schools in order to use their open spaces such as: parking lots, open grounds and fields, given that school facilities will not be utilized this Fall (consider innovative Drive-Thru locations).
- Restore historical polling locations that were accessible to voters who lacked transportation (prior to consolidated voting centers in the 2020 primary).
- Effectively establish a comprehensive Public Information Campaign to communicate all changes to voting protocols and polling locations within reasonable time via emails, text, mailers, phone calls, social media, etc., as the current system in place is failing.

On May 8th Governor Gavin Newsom signed an order that recognized the threat that Covid-19 posed to the public health and required that a Vote by Mail Ballot be sent to every voter in the upcoming election, which I applaud. Even with all voters receiving Vote by Mail Ballots we must still take precautions because many voters will not change their voting patterns and voting rituals, we have to support a voting plan that focuses on reducing the crowded polling locations and evenly disperses the voting population across a greater number of polling locations. Many of the policies that L.A County has put in place have not been effective in increasing voter participation or voter safety. This is why I urge you to help us stop this voter suppression and give our disenfranchised communities a voice.

Secretary Padilla, we need your help in guaranteeing that the demands listed above are met, especially increasing polling locations, and that historically disenfranchised black and brown communities find empowerment through their vote. I thank you in advance for your time and I look forward to discussing this in greater detail, I may be reached at (323) 749-6718.

Respectfully,


Efren Martinez
California State Assembly Candidate, 59th District

Cc: Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Dean C. Logan, Los Angeles County Clerk
Los Angeles Times