July 28, 2020

Senator Mitch McConnell
Senator Charles E. Schumer
Senator Richard C. Shelby
Senator Patrick J. Leahy
Senator Roy Blunt
Senator Amy Klobuchar

Dear Senators:

As Secretaries of State of both major political parties who oversee the election systems of our respective states, we write in strong support of additional federal funding to enable the smooth and safe administration of elections in 2020. The stakes are high. And time is short.

The COVID-19 pandemic is testing our democracy. A number of states have faced challenges during recent primary elections. Local administrators were sometimes overwhelmed by logistical problems such as huge volumes of last-minute absentee ballot applications, unexpected shortages of poll workers, and difficulty of procuring and distributing supplies. As we anticipate significantly higher voter turnout in the November General Election, we believe those kinds of problems could be even larger.

The challenge we face is to ensure that voters and our election workers can safely participate in the election process. While none of us knows what the world will look like on November 3rd, the most responsible posture is to hope for the best and plan for the worst. The plans in each of our states depend on adequate resources.

While we are truly grateful for the resources that Congress made available in the CARES Act for election administration, more funding is critical. Current funding levels help to offset, but do not cover, the unexpectedly high costs that state and local governments face in trying to administer safe and secure elections this year. Additional funding would be particularly critical in ensuring that local jurisdictions have sufficient staff to handle the many unforeseen challenges that will come with conducting a national election during a pandemic. Importantly, we hope that any appropriation will be free of mandates such as a “state match” requirement – which would have the effect of excluding many states from being able to access the funds.
We respectfully request that you continue to help states prepare our election systems for operations during the pandemic by appropriating supplemental election administration funds to the states. Our democracy depends on it. Without additional funds, there is a risk of serious election disruptions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Steve Simon
Secretary of State of Minnesota

Kathy Boockvar
Secretary of State of Pennsylvania

Nellie Gorbea
Secretary of State of Rhode Island

Jena Griswold
Secretary of State of Colorado

Katie Hobbs
Secretary of State of Arizona

Kim Wyman
Secretary of State of Washington

Maggie Toulouse Oliver
Secretary of State of New Mexico

Alex Padilla
Secretary of State of California

Jim Condos
Secretary of State of Vermont

Jocelyn Benson
Secretary of State of Michigan
Secretary of State Tahesha Way
New Jersey