

ALCEE L. HASTINGS
20TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON RULES
VICE-CHAIRMAN

UNITED STATES
HELSINKI COMMISSION
CHAIRMAN

FLORIDA DELEGATION
CO-CHAIRMAN

SENIOR DEMOCRATIC WHIP



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0920

PLEASE RESPOND TO:

2353 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515-0923
Telephone: (202) 225-1313
Fax: (202) 225-1171

5701 NW 88th Avenue
Suite 200
Tamarac, FL 33321
Telephone: (954) 733-2800
Fax: (954) 722-9399

West Palm Beach
5725 Corporate Way
Suite 208
West Palm Beach, FL 33407
P: (561) 461-6767
F: (954) 722-9399

www.alceehastings.house.gov

April 9, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Schumer:

As you continue to formulate a Phase IV legislative package in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, I respectfully urge you to include robust funding for the United States Postal Service (USPS) to help states and jurisdictions successfully implement vote-by-mail systems for the upcoming November elections.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to transform life across our nation, with millions of Americans sheltering in place to help mitigate the virus's spread. This strategy has already interrupted and delayed at least 15 primary elections throughout the United States and will likely continue to impact elections through the summer and quite possibly through the end of the year, as medical experts have warned of second- and third-wave outbreaks of COVID-19.

As we continue to adapt to this new reality, Americans must not be forced to choose between the voting box and their health. Therefore, we must take appropriate steps now to ensure all Americans wishing to exercise their franchise are able to do so through primary season and the general election in November in a way that protects their health and their ballot. Indeed, the Supreme Court's decision refusing to extend the deadline for absentee voting in Wisconsin in *Republican National Committee, Et Al. v. Democratic National Committee, Et Al.* underlines the novel and complicated issues that will quickly be fought in district courts across the country and is evidence of why Congress should move with all due haste to provide states with the ability to implement robust and secure vote-by-mail systems in time for the general election. The USPS will play a central role in all of these systems as ballots are sent out to voters and returned to election officials.

The bipartisan CARES Act signed by President Donald Trump allocated \$400 million for states to help prepare for the 2020 elections, increase the ability to vote by mail, expand early voting and online registration, and increase the safety of voting in-person by providing additional voting facilities and poll-workers. The CARES Act, however, only allowed the postal service to borrow up to \$10 billion to survive, an insufficient amount for ensuring vote-by-mail programs succeed nationwide. As our country continues to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, I urge you to ensure the USPS has the resources it needs to accommodate a surge in vote-by-mail ballots to help states ensure its voters are counted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alcee L. Hastings". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress