

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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**Maryland State Board of Elections Delivers Comprehensive Plan for June 2nd
Presidential Primary**

Annapolis, MD (April 2, 2020) - To help reduce the spread of COVID-19, the Maryland State Board of Elections (SBE) on Thursday approved its Comprehensive Plan for the 2020 Presidential Primary Election and submitted it to Governor Larry Hogan as required by the governor's March 17, 2020 [proclamation](#). The 2020 Presidential Primary Election is scheduled for June 2, 2020. The comprehensive plan will be posted once it is submitted to Governor Hogan.

The goal of the comprehensive plan is to protect voters and election workers during the COVID-19 pandemic while also safeguarding the fundamental right to vote. To fulfill this goal, SBE proposes to:

- **Send absentee ballots:** Mail all eligible active voters an absentee ballot along with a return envelope with prepaid postage
- **Permit ballot drop offs:** During early voting and through election day, voters will have the option to drop off ballots at certain early voting centers. Voters may drop off their ballots at these locations between May 21st and through June 2nd.
- **Allow in-person voting at certain locations:** On election day, June 2nd, voters can drop off ballots or, for voters who are unable to vote by mail, vote in person at certain locations.

The approved plan allows for ballot drop off after early voting ends through election day. Rigorous security and retrieval procedures are being developed, implemented and audited.

“Based on extensive consultation with state and federal public health officials, the Board believes this plan achieves the necessary balance between protecting public health and safeguarding the right to vote,” said Linda Lamone, Administrator of the State Board of Elections. “We do not adopt these changes lightly, and are taking the appropriate steps to ensure every eligible Marylander has the opportunity to vote either by mail or in-person.”

To prepare this plan, SBE consulted extensively with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) on infectious disease control and public health issues related to conducting an election under the current circumstances. SBE also obtained feedback and information from the staff of the local boards of elections on the various options to conduct the upcoming presidential primary election.

In response to questions from the Board, MDH stated its belief that Maryland in late March was still in the growth phase of this epidemic, and that current projections indicate that the COVID-19 outbreak will continue to likely last months, not weeks.. Further, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recognized the risks associated with in-person voting and recommends using voting methods that minimize direct contact with other people and reducing crowd size at voting locations:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/election-polling-locations.html>

Background:

On March 17, 2020, Governor Hogan issued a proclamation moving the State's presidential primary election from April 28, 2020 to June 2, 2020 and requiring that SBE, in consultation with MDH, submit no later than April 3, 2020 a comprehensive plan to conduct this election. The governor's proclamation can be viewed at:

<https://governor.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Renewal-of-State-of-Emergency.pdf>

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