

2020

VOTER JUSTICE AGENDA



The [coronavirus cases](#) linked to long lines and other unsafe voting conditions in Wisconsin's April 9 election were largely preventable, and election officials have a moral obligation to ensure this never happens again. As our country confronts the COVID-19 pandemic as well as increasingly violent, divisive rhetoric from hate groups and political opportunists targeting Black voters, all state and local voting jurisdictions should expand voting options to the maximum extent possible for all remaining elections in 2020. Black communities are an integral part of America as a whole, so what happens to us impacts all of society. These measures will help ensure a free, fair, and safe voting experience for Black voters, which is vital for protecting public health and the democratic process for the entire country.

I. REDUCE THE NEED TO VOTE IN-PERSON WITH:

1. Universal, no-excuse vote-by-mail.

To reduce the number of people crowding into polling places and standing in line on election day, all eligible voters must be able to receive and return a ballot by mail using a prepaid postal envelope. This reduces the risk of COVID-19 spreading while increasing access to the ballot.

2. Secure and accessible ballot collection sites.

To ensure no one in our community is disenfranchised due to lack of mail service, a consistent mailing address, or transportation, states must ensure Black communities have secure, accessible ballot collection sites close to where they live, where voters can receive and return their ballots. These spaces must allow voters to properly observe physical distancing guidelines.

3. Voter-verifiable ballot tracking.

After decades of disenfranchisement, it's understandable that Black people are concerned that our votes won't be counted. Officials must provide systems that allow voters to track the status of their individual ballot through the system and know it is counted.

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II. MAKE IN-PERSON VOTING SAFER WITH:

4. Expanded early voting.

For some voters, voting in-person is the only way to ensure they have the proper access, assistance, and/or privacy needed to cast a ballot, so we must take every step to ensure they can do so as safely as possible. Localities must offer multiple in-person early voting locations for 30 days leading up to election day, including weekends. This will reduce crowds at individual polling places and shorten lines on election day, which reduces the risk of COVID-19 spreading while increasing access to the ballot.

5. Strong public health protocols at polling places.

Along with taking steps to reduce the number of people that need to vote in-person overall and at any one time, there must also be proper disease prevention protocols in place to protect the remaining in-person voters and poll workers. Measures such as physical distancing, frequent disinfection of shared surfaces, and mask-wearing must be thoroughly and fairly enforced.

6. Protection from intimidation.

- All polling places and their immediate surroundings **must** be gun-free zones.
- Officials must work to prevent efforts by political operatives and extremist groups to intimidate or mislead Black voters and suppress Black turnout, and prosecute people and organizations who engage in threatening election-related behavior.
- As white supremacists have been embraced and defended by President Trump and other top federal officials, local officials regardless of political affiliation must clearly declare their commitment to vigorously defending the civil rights of Black voters and anyone else targeted by hate groups in their jurisdictions.
- Social media companies like Facebook and Twitter must step up and protect users from organized disinformation and intimidation campaigns, which disproportionately target Black activists and voters.