



March 20, 2020

Dear Members of the Indiana Election Commission,

Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy and the fundamental right upon which all our civil liberties rest. The American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana works to protect and expand Americans' freedom to vote. Due to the public health emergency caused by COVID-19, voters will likely encounter a variety of barriers to the ballot. The ACLU of Indiana recognizes the threat the virus poses and the anxiety and fear that it has understandably created in all of us. The threat also creates the need for sound, vigorous and responsible government action.

We are happy to see the robust, bi-partisan conversation happening at the state level to proactively address the barriers many voters may face in upcoming elections. We are especially encouraged by the discussion regarding no-excuse absentee voting. The ACLU of Indiana believes that any voter should be allowed to vote absentee for any reason, and regardless of reason that voter should be able to cast that ballot either in-person or by mail. That is why we support updating Indiana policies to allow no-excuse absentee voting.

Additionally, the ACLU of Indiana has identified other policy changes that could remove barriers for Hoosier voters during these uncertain times.

1. The Commission should consider extending the absentee ballot application deadline to the November general election. Currently, the ballot request deadline in Indiana is 12 days. [Most states](#) are 7 days or less.
2. Voters should have an opportunity to request an absentee ballot by web portal, email or by phone. Finding a stamp and requesting an absentee ballot before Election Day could be a barrier for many voters.
3. The Commission should extend the deadline for returning an absentee ballot. Indiana currently requires ballots to be returned by Election Day. We recommend that the Commission changes that requirement so that all ballots postmarked before or during Election Day are counted.

Thank you for the hard work you are doing to ensure that every Hoosier has the right to vote during this public health crisis. As you work to keep our communities safe and



Indiana

strong, we are happy to confer and discuss how best to protect civil liberties in your COVID-19 response planning. Please contact me at kblair@aclu-in.org if our team at the ACLU of Indiana can be of service.