Keeping Democracy Alive during the COVID Crisis

Life has certainly changed for all of us. I am so grateful for all the helpers and essential workers who are making sure we have food, health care, and supplies. In the midst of this global pandemic, we have seen an unprecedented united effort to identify needs, provide vital services, serve those in our vulnerable communities, take care of the sick, and do our individual part to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus-19.

It was just a month ago that we conducted the March 3 Presidential Primary as news of this highly contagious and deadly disease was wreaking havoc in the United States after infecting China, Italy and other European countries. The weekend before, I and my staff went to every store we could find to purchase hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes to protect our poll workers and voters.

We made it through that day and have since certified the vote. We now turn our attentions to the November 3 Presidential General Election. It is abundantly clear that there is not enough hand sanitizer and disinfectant in the world to make people feel safe to work or vote at a polling place in November.

So, as we have all done in these last 30 days, we need to rethink how we do things to put health and public safety first. I believe it is imperative to keep the November 3 election on schedule, but we all need to do our part to keep democracy alive. My plan is to conduct the election by mailing a ballot to all voters. I would like to provide some form of in-person voting and assistance, but it depends on what is happening with public health and safety at that time.

We will do whatever we can to make sure everyone who wants to vote, can vote. We have a transportable voting system, and we have a Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail ballot program designed for persons with disabilities and those in the military and overseas to be able to vote from wherever they are.

Voters also need to do their part. Be sure to register at your current address under your current name. Do it as soon as you move and prior to October 19, so you won’t have to come in person to do a Same Day Voter Registration.

Also, please pay attention to the mail being delivered to your home, especially your ballot which will be mailed on October 5. Sign up for Informed Delivery from the United States Postal Service. It is free and every day you will get an email with a photo of your mail that is being delivered to you.

While we are grateful for the federal stimulus money that gives elections officials in the nation $400 million to do what we need to conduct the November election under these new health and safety standards, it is merely a down payment on democracy. We need $1.5 to $2 billion to cover corona-related election costs in November.

The weeks and months ahead will not be easy. These are challenging times that will take creativity, patience, and cooperation. This is our new reality and we will not let it deter our resolve to conduct the November 3 Presidential General Election. Working with our voters and election partners, I am certain we can conduct the November election with integrity and accuracy. I promise to do my part to keep democracy alive, and if we all do our part, it will thrive!