

July 21, 2020

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

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230, The Capitol  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221, The Capitol  
Washington DC 20510

Honorable Leaders,

We write to urge you to move rapidly and aggressively to ensure that every person in the U.S. who is eligible to vote is able to do so without risking their health. Our members represent the front-line health and medical professionals that are seeing first-hand the devastating health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As health professionals, we know that it will take many months – likely beyond election day, 2020 – before life is fully back to normal in the U.S. There will be no COVID-19 vaccine prior to election day. While we do not yet know how the COVID-19 virus will respond to seasonal weather changes, it is possible that there will be a resurgence of infections in the fall, placing people at even greater risk. This means that millions of people at highest risk (e.g. older people and those with a wide variety of pre-existing medical conditions) will still need to maintain vigorous physical distancing routines at the time of the election.

Many polling places are small and crowded, or require people to wait in long and crowded lines, making physical distancing almost impossible.

High risk individuals have options when it comes to obtaining groceries and medications, so that they do not need to risk their health. People must have similar options when it comes to voting. We need a vote-by-mail option to protect our most vulnerable patients.

No American should ever be forced to choose between their health and their right to vote.

We implore you to ensure that no American is forced to make that choice. Act now to ensure that every state is required to implement a vote-by-mail option before the 2020 presidential election, and is provided funding to do so in a careful and fair manner. This is the only way to protect voters and poll workers from COVID-19. It is the only way to ensure a free, fair, secure, safe, and healthy election.

Sincerely,

Health Organizations *(listed below)*

- Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
- American Academy of Pediatrics, CA Chapter 1
- American Academy of Pediatrics, CA Chapter 3
- American Association for Community Psychiatry
- American Association of Public Health Physicians
- American College of Emergency Physicians – CA
- American Medical Women’s Association
- American Psychiatric Association
- Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
- Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
- California Medical Association
- Center for Climate Change and Health
- Citizens Climate Lobby Health Team
- Climate 911
- Climate for Health, ecoAmerica
- Climate Health Now
- Climate Psychiatry Alliance
- Emory University School of Nursing
- George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication
- Georgia Clinicians for Climate Action
- Georgia State Medical Association, Inc.
- Health Care Without Harm
- Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate
- Interfaith Public Health Network
- Iowa Public Health Association
- LBGT PA caucus
- Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health
- Medical Students for a Sustainable Future
- MI Air MI Health
- Michigan Clinicians for Climate Action
- National Association of Social Workers
- National Hispanic Medical Association
- National Student Nurses’ Association, Inc.
- National Medical Association
- National Medical Association Region III
- Ohio Clinicians for Climate Action
- Physicians for Social Responsibility
- Physicians for Social Responsibility – Florida
- Physicians for Social Responsibility – Maine
- Physicians for Social Responsibility – Oregon
- Physicians for Social Responsibility – San Francisco Bay Area
- Physicians for Social Responsibility – Texas
- Prevention Institute
- Progressive Doctors
- Rutgers Global Health Institute
- School of Nursing, University of Minnesota
- Social Marketing Association of North America
- Students for a National Health Program - Oklahoma
- The Climate Center
- The W. Montague Cobb Institute
- Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment
- VEP Healthcare
- Virginia Clinicians for Climate Action
- Wisconsin Health Professionals for Climate Action

