

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 21, 2020

The Ohio Controlling Board
30 East Broad Street, 34th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Controlling Board President Zimpher and Members of the Controlling Board,

We write to you with regard to an urgent issue that will greatly impact Ohioans ability to exercise their constitutional right to vote this coming November. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, this election will occur under unprecedented circumstances. However, we must not allow these circumstances to impede our duty to provide Ohioans with the ability to safely and accessibly exercise their constitutional right to vote. With these concerns in mind, we request that you affirm Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose's ability to pay postage on all absentee ballots and ballot requests for the upcoming 2020 General Election. Specifically, we ask that you consider this matter at your Monday, August 24th meeting in order to provide Secretary LaRose with the time needed to implement a plan to prepay postage.

Many Ohioans, particularly our seniors and those with underlying health conditions, are concerned about how they might safely cast their vote this November. In order to preserve access to our democratic process, we must do all that we can to ensure that health concerns do not prevent any Ohioan from casting a vote. Given the recent and unfortunate decision to restrict drop boxes to one per county, many Ohioans will be forced to mail in their ballot. Prepaid postage for absentee ballots will help prepare Ohio for a smoother election process by eliminating the cost associated with submitting an absentee ballot. It will also allow Secretary LaRose to make the appropriate preparations to help ensure that the challenging circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic do not prevent any Ohioan from casting their vote this fall.

Secretary LaRose's solution to utilize funds from his own business division ensures that no state general revenue fund or federal support will be needed, meaning the plan will not impact the state budget in any way. We urge you to approve the funds necessary for this proposal at the August 24, 2020 meeting of the controlling board. Thank you for your consideration and for your service to the State of Ohio.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress



Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

cc: Senator Matt Dolan, Senator Bob Peterson, Senator Vernon Sykes,
Representative Scott Oelslager Representative Shane Wilkin, Representative Jack Cera,
Kimberly Murnieks, Director, Ohio Office of Budget and Management,
Senate President Obhof, Minority Leader Yuko, Speaker Cupp, Minority Leader Sykes