

Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20515

February 1, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President,

We write to request that your budget for Fiscal Year 2023 include \$5 billion in much needed funding for critical election infrastructure. Defined as “critical infrastructure” by the Department of Homeland Security, election infrastructure includes voter registration databases, information technology systems, voting systems, storage facilities, polling locations, and staffing to support this critical infrastructure, as well as the security necessary to safeguard the integrity of our elections. Ensuring this funding effectively reaches local election departments is absolutely vital to protecting Americans’ confidence in the outcome of elections in 2022 and beyond.

The 2020 elections saw record high turnout numbers. Despite lacking resources, local nonpartisan election administrators across the country worked long hours in difficult environments to provide voters access to the ballot amid a global pandemic. These efforts included 24 hour early voting sites to ensure that polling locations weren’t overcrowded, and additional ballot drop boxes to provide easier access. It also meant updating decades-old voting machines and purchasing new equipment to ensure the surge of mail-in ballots could be counted expeditiously and accurately.

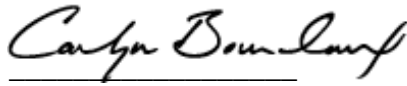
These needs are even more urgent for many rural and tribal communities. For instance, Apache, Navajo, and Coconino Counties in Arizona have significant extremely rural and tribal areas that are in desperate need of funding. These citizens live far distances from voting centers which can cause ballot access issues. This was coupled with postal delivery delays, which made many citizens who typically rely on safe and secure mail-in ballots worry that their ballots would not be accepted in time. Voters in red and blue counties all across the country have experienced similar challenges.

Additionally, across the nation we have seen the impact the stress has had on our election supervisors and critical personnel. Recent press reports have spoken to the physical harm that threatens local officials who do year-round work to safeguard our right to vote. For example, Macon-Bibb County in Georgia lost its election supervisor who resigned because of the excessive workload and overwhelming stress. Unfortunately, this incident is not unique and is being seen in counties across the country. In Texas, state election officials already constrained by tight budgets are faced with a maintenance bill in the hundreds of thousands of dollars to update aging voting machines. Estimates for modernizing Texas’s election infrastructure are predicted to cost nearly \$3 billion over 10 years. Nationwide, the price tag to overhaul our election infrastructure is estimated at \$53 billion, which is why we must begin to make these critical investments today.

In 2020, investments in infrastructure security were made possible through several different funding sources, including funds through the CARES Act and philanthropic grants. Much of that money represented a one-time boost which, while critical, did not make up for the chronic underfunding of election infrastructure that has left our local administrators and the systems they operate extremely vulnerable. We must have resources to counter those threats.

Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of our democracy. While we oppose efforts to limit legal access to voting, it should never be the case that citizens are unable to have their vote counted because of outdated equipment, malfunctioning software, or too few election workers to manage polling sites. We urge you to consider adding \$5 billion to your FY 23 budget request so that we may begin the work of improving our election infrastructure immediately.

Sincerely,



Carolyn Bourdeaux
Member of Congress



Mondaire Jones
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____

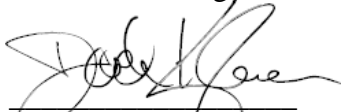

John Sarbanes
Member of Congress



Dean Phillips
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee
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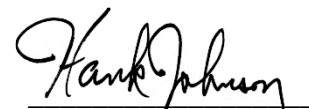
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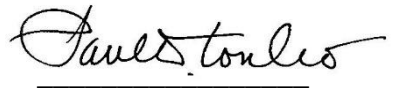
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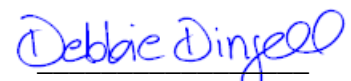
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_____/s/_____


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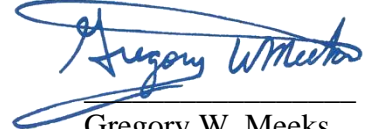
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Member of Congress



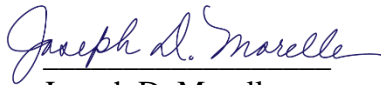
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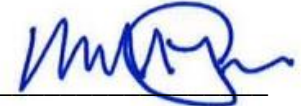
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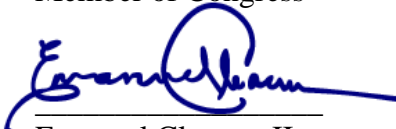
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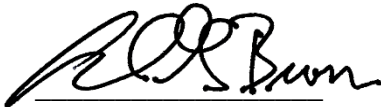
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