

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4504

September 15, 2020

Dear Majority Leader McConnell,

Nothing is more fundamental to our democracy than the integrity of our elections. As you know, there is a great deal of concern about possible confusion and chaos in the upcoming November 3rd election. Sadly, there are some who are systematically undermining public confidence in the voting process, and irresponsibly fanning suspicions and conspiracy theories about the legitimacy of election results.

We were very pleased to see a recent statement you made in Kentucky that made it clear that voting by mail in our country is well-established, is reliable and that; “Many parts of our country vote by mail. Oregon, Washington and Colorado have voted by mail for years.” This is precisely the kind of reassurance that American voters need going into this election, especially at a time when mail-in ballots will be at a record high because of safety concerns amid the pandemic.

At this historic moment we believe that Democrats and Republicans in the Senate must come together to guarantee the integrity of our election process. With the election less than two months away the Senate should immediately establish a special bipartisan committee, with equal representation from both parties. The function of that committee must be to hold hearings about what is being done around the country to make certain that our public institutions are prepared to conduct a smooth and reliable election which will be free from voter suppression and intimidation, that every vote will be counted and that there will be confidence in the ultimate outcome. These hearings should include state and local officials from around the country, including Secretaries of State and representatives from local law enforcement, to learn how they plan to handle the Election Day process and the days that follow.

To rebuild confidence in the upcoming election the Senate hearings should focus on at least the following three issues:

1. Confirm the security of, and confidence in, our vote-by-mail systems.

Despite the clear security of our vote-by-mail system, some have continued to undermine it with unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud. As you have correctly

said, people “can vote early, you can vote on Election Day, or you can drop it in the mail,” and that voters should “not worry about your vote not counting.”

2. Understand what we must do to ensure that every vote is counted, and how election results will be reported differently this year because of the substantial increase in mail-in ballots as a result of the pandemic. We know a number of states may well be counting ballots for a period of time after Election Day, and that those votes may be determinative in this election. To avoid disinformation, conspiracy theories, and suspicion about results, we must understand the likely timeline for this process.

3. Discuss and prepare for possible post-election scenarios. A bipartisan group of experts and officials have studied multiple scenarios where the outcome of the election was not immediately known. Some of these scenarios resulted in unrest and even violence. We would like to hear from the most knowledgeable people in the country as to how we can do everything possible to make sure that the election and the period afterward is secure and peaceful.

We believe this issue is above partisan politics. It is about the very essence of American democracy. Let us come together, Republicans and Democrats, to ensure the security of our elections and assure Americans’ confidence in the result.

We look forward to your response and cooperation in addressing these vital matters.

Sincerely,



CHARLES E. SCHUMER
UNITED STATES SENATOR



BERNARD SANDERS
UNITED STATES SENATOR