



OFFICE OF THE IOWA SECRETARY OF STATE

**EMERGENCY ELECTION DIRECTIVE**

**WHEREAS**, on March 9, 2020, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds issued a Proclamation of Disaster Emergency to coordinate the State of Iowa's response to the COVID-19 outbreak and such disaster continues to exist; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 13, 2020, President Donald J. Trump issued a proclamation declaring that the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States constitutes a national emergency; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 17, 2020, a Proclamation of Public Health Disaster Emergency was issued to provide additional needed resources and measures to respond to this disaster, and such public health disaster continues to exist and has been extended until July 25, 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, Iowa Code §47.1 tasks the Iowa Secretary of State with prescribing uniform election practices and procedures and the necessary forms required for the conduct of elections in the State of Iowa; and

**WHEREAS**, Iowa Code §53.2(2)(a) states that the Iowa Secretary of State's Office shall prescribe the official form for absentee ballot applications; and

**WHEREAS**, the Iowa Secretary of State's Office has consulted with all 99 County Auditors and not all counties can send an Official State of Iowa Absentee Ballot Request form with official instructions to the registered voters of their county; and

**WHEREAS**, the transmission of mail through the international mail stream has been severely impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic, and Iowa's

Uniformed and Overseas Citizens (UOCAVA voters) rely on international postal service systems to receive and return their absentee ballots; and

**WHEREAS**, Iowa Code §53.51 states that laws regarding UOCAVA voters “shall be liberally construed in order to provide means and opportunity for qualified voters of the state of Iowa serving in the armed forces of the United States to vote”; and

**WHEREAS**, uniform and non-discriminatory election practices are an essential part of slowing the spread of COVID-19 in all counties of our state.

NOW THEREFORE, I, PAUL D. PATE, Iowa Secretary of State, by the power and authority vested in me by the Iowa Code §47.1 do hereby ORDER and DIRECT the following:

### **Statewide Absentee Ballot Request Form Mailing**

**SECTION ONE.** Utilizing federal HAVA funds distributed to states via the CARES Act, the Iowa Secretary of State’s Office shall mail an Official State of Iowa Absentee Ballot Request form with instructions to Iowa’s active registered voters for the November 3, 2020 General Election, which shall be blank except for the Election Date and Type. The Secretary of State’s Office shall utilize practices and procedures similar to those utilized for the June 2020 Primary Election. The Secretary of State’s Office may send additional mailings to voters regarding voting processes and the impact of COVID-19 on elections.

**SECTION TWO.** To ensure uniformity and to provide voters with consistent guidance on the absentee ballot application process, County Auditors shall distribute only the blank Official State of Iowa Absentee Ballot Request Form with official instructions that is promulgated by the Secretary of State’s Office pursuant Iowa Code §53.2(2)(a). County Auditors may distribute blank Official State of Iowa Absentee Ballot Request forms promulgated by the Secretary of State’s Office pursuant Iowa Code §53.2(2)(a) without the official instructions to voters voting pursuant to Iowa Code §§53.10 and 53.11.

**Compliance with the federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)**

**SECTION THREE.** To ensure access for Iowa's UOCAVA voters, the electronic transmission of a voted absentee ballot from the voter to their County Auditor shall be permitted for all UOCAVA voters for elections occurring in 2020. All UOCAVA voters who utilize electronic transmission of their voted ballot for elections occurring in 2020 shall be required to waive their right to a secret ballot through the current process of signing an affidavit to that effect.

**Voters who are Residents of Health Care Facilities**

**SECTION FOUR.** For all elections occurring in 2020, the provisions of Iowa Code §§53.22(3) and 53.22(6) shall apply to individuals admitted to health care facilities following the deadline specified in Iowa Code §53.2(1)(b).