



October 25, 2021

Justin Levitt  
Senior Policy Adviser to the President for Democracy and Voting Rights  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Levitt:

We are writing to urge President Biden to take two critical steps to further access the right to vote, both of which would advance the same objectives identified in his Executive Order on the issue and are well within his authority. Exec. Order 14019, 86 Fed. Reg. 13623 (Mar. 7, 2021). These two actions could make a dramatic impact on voting access and demonstrate the Administration's full support of an active and engaged electorate. At a time when access to the vote is on the line at every level of government, the President must do everything in his power to support democratic participation.

First, President Biden should declare Election Day a federal government holiday. While the Federal Government already has a policy of granting employees time off to vote and supporting Federal employees who wish to volunteer as non-partisan poll workers or observers, declaring a federal government holiday would bolster Federal employees' ability to participate at the polls and encourage civic engagement. While the President cannot unilaterally designate Election Day a national holiday for all citizens, he does have authority over the Federal work force. If employees need not seek special permission for time off to vote or volunteer, we expect many more would take advantage of these opportunities.

Second, the Federal Government could dramatically extend the reach of its policies encouraging voter participation by applying its internal policies to its contractors. Specifically, the Administration should require that all new Federal contracts include a requirement to give employees paid time off to vote or to volunteer as poll workers or observers. The Federal Government spends more than \$500 billion annually on Federal contracts, and the top contractors have millions of employees. This order would have a substantial impact across the country. As you know, voters face many hurdles to the ballot box. Guaranteed time off to participate in our democracy could dramatically reduce those hurdles for many Americans.

The President has the authority to issue these orders. For example, on April 27, 2021, he issued Executive Order 14026, requiring that certain federal contractors raise their minimum wage to \$15 an hour. By promulgating a similar order relating to time off for voting and volunteering, the President could make it easier for millions of workers to cast their ballots and to assist others in doing so.

We hope that the President will continue to use his executive authority, as he did with Executive Order 14019, to cement civic engagement as a priority for the Federal Government. We would welcome the opportunity to speak to you further about these proposals.

Sincerely,



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