September 18, 2020

Dear Cecil County Citizens,

Yesterday, Health Officer Lauren Levy released a statement noting a considerable increase in positive cases of COVID-19 in Cecil County over recent weeks. This is alarming news and a reminder that this virus should be taken seriously. We simply must continue to follow the recommended health guidelines:

- Wear a mask when outside of your home!
- Avoid crowds and practice social distancing protocols!
- Practice proven hygiene behaviors like washing hands, not touching your face and sneezing into your elbow!

Since mid-March, we have provided local, coronavirus-related news and updates and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Please visit our website for the latest information: https://www.ccgov.org/services/coronavirus.

On February 3, 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution was ratified prohibiting any state from denying a citizen the right to vote based upon race, color or previous condition of servitude. It seems abhorrent that it took until August 18, 1920 to ratify into the same Constitution the Nineteenth Amendment giving women the right to vote. Recently we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the suffrage movement that actually began in 1848.

In early September 2020 the Cecil County Board of Elections (CCBOE) had applications vote by mail ballots (absentee ballot) mailed to every registered Cecil County citizen. Ms. Ruie Lavoie, Director of the CCBOE, reports that as of this date the CCBOE has received over 10,000 requests for absentee or vote by mail ballots. The Board of Elections is currently processing those requests. Voters who requested a vote by mail ballot should expect to receive their ballot during the first 2 weeks in October, 2020. If you requested a vote by mail ballot and have not received a ballot by October 16, 2020, please contact the election office at 410.996.5310.

Across the country as well as in this county the increase in requested vote by mail ballots is mainly due to the concern associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and the unwillingness of individuals to expose themselves to large gatherings of people. In addition, for many voting by mail is simply more convenient. **Warning:** if you vote by mail or use a drop box, it is a felony to attempt to vote in person, meaning it is illegal to attempt to vote twice in the same election.
An alternative to voting by mail using the United States Postal Services, is depositing the mail-in ballot in one of six drop boxes under the jurisdiction of the CCBOE. These are located at the five voting sites located at each of the five Cecil County Public School high schools (available for use starting October 15th) and a sixth that is located at the Cecil County Government Administration Offices on Chesapeake Blvd in Elkton which will be available for use starting September 29th. These drop boxes are under surveillance 24/7 and are checked and emptied at least two times each day.

The third option is to vote early in-person. Early voting is available between October 25th and November 2nd at the Cecil County Government Administration Building located at 200 Chesapeake Blvd., Elkton, MD. Early Voting hours are from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm each day, including the weekend.

The last option for voting in the November General Election is in-person on November 3, 2020, between the hours of 7:00 am and 8:00 pm. Again, there will be six in-person voting sites. One each at Bohemia Manor High School, Elkton High School, North East High School, Perryville High School and Rising Sun High School. A sixth site is again located at the County Administration Building in Elkton.

During all in-person voting, for the health and safety of our voters and poll workers, voters must remain six feet apart, will be required to wear a mask and will have their temperature checked upon entering any of the vote center buildings. To maintain proper distancing, the number of voters permitted inside a voting center at one time may be limited. This may result in lines and wait times. The Board of Elections advises the best time to vote in person is on weekends during Early Voting and between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Election Day.

If you have further questions regarding the logistics associated with the General Election check our https://www.ccgov.org/government/election-board or by calling 410-996-5310.

The founding fathers established in the United States Constitution that every citizen had the right to vote. Each eligible citizen should have a say in who will lead at the federal, state and local levels. The right to vote is not just a right, but a privilege. In many countries around the world, the right to vote does not exist.

My first plea to every Cecil County voter is that you, in fact, vote. My second request is that you study each candidate at all levels on the ballot and choose to support those who will help our country, our state and our county.

Dr. Alan J. McCarthy
Cecil County Executive