

SUBJECT: Vote by Mail

REFERRED TO: Executive Board

SUBMITTED BY: Minnesota State Retiree Council – AFL-CIO

WHEREAS: The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a dramatic impact on working Minnesotans, our health, well-being, and economic security; and

WHEREAS: Democracy is a core principle of the labor movement; and

WHEREAS: Due to actions taken by, and recommendations from, the federal and state governments—together with the prediction by Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, that there will likely be a second coronavirus outbreak in the fall—social distancing and other precautions will likely have detrimental impacts on our August 11 State Primary and November 3 General Election; and

WHEREAS: Such actions will affect how Minnesotans register to vote, vote early by mail and in-person, and how we vote in-person on Election Day; and

WHEREAS: Minnesotans value voting and have the highest voter turnout in the nation; and

WHEREAS: Minnesotans must not be forced to choose between exercising our right to vote and putting ourselves, our families, and communities at risk; and

WHEREAS: Over the past month, presidential primary contests were held in other states that did not meet the standards we expect in our elections, and many other elections have been postponed; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Minnesota AFL-CIO support the Secretary of State's request to the Minnesota Legislature to act now to guarantee free and fair elections take place in Minnesota this year by ensuring every registered Minnesota voter is mailed an absentee ballot, including pre-paid postage for return; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Minnesota AFL-CIO support ballots postmarked by Election Day should be accepted, rather than those that are received by Election Day and that individuals and community organizations should be allowed to assist voters to complete, then collect and deliver, sealed ballots; and, be it further

RESOLVED: That the Minnesota AFL-CIO support individuals on Minnesota's eleven reservations be allowed to serve as witnesses for absentee ballots, even if the individuals lack a street address; and, be it further

RESOLVED: That the Minnesota AFL-CIO support that a true early vote system be implemented so that voters may cast their ballot in-person for the forty-six days prior to Election Day, removing the additional step of filling out an absentee ballot application; and, be it further

RESOLVED: That the Minnesota AFL-CIO support state assistance for counties and cities that run elections for more early- and Election Day polling locations in order that the number of people waiting in line to vote in-person will be reduced and for municipalities and counties to place ballot drop-boxes outside of local government buildings; and, be it further

RESOLVED: That the Minnesota AFL-CIO support extending the May 1 deadline for major political parties to submit the names of those who will serve as election judges, providing time to recruit younger people to operate our elections, which rely on nearly 30,000 workers; and, be it further

RESOLVED: That the Minnesota AFL-CIO support a voter registration form, together with an application for an absentee ballot, be sent to every unregistered Minnesotan who is eligible, including pre-paid postage for return.