

SECRETARY OF STATE

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March 4, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

In 2022, you issued Executive Order 14019, which called for federal agencies to develop plans related to voter registration and the casting of ballots in elections. Unfortunately, your administration ignored a letter sent from my predecessor and many of my colleagues which expressed concerns about the overreach, intrusion in state election administration, interference in the election process, and possible intimidation of individuals applying for federal benefits at federal agencies that this executive order represents—concerns which I share.

In remarks delivered on February 27, Vice President Kamala Harris discussed new plans for certain federal agencies to misuse taxpayer funds not authorized by Congress and overstep their duties as it relates to elections, an area whose authority is given to the states, not the Executive Branch, in Article I, Section 4 of the United States Constitution. She also remarked that your administration was going to again call on Congress to pass the so-called “Freedom to Vote Act.” This legislation represents a federal takeover of elections, and would:

- Severely limit state voter ID laws. It should be noted that a vast majority (80%) of voters across the nation support requiring a photo ID to cast a ballot, according to polls done by both Gallup and Monmouth University.
- Mandate that states adopt automatic and same-day voter registration. In Louisiana, nearly 90% of all eligible citizens are registered to vote, and it has never been easier than now to register in our state. This is thanks to policies and procedures enacted in Baton Rouge, not Washington, D.C.
- Mandate that states adopt at least 15 ten-hour days of early voting, including Sunday voting, with early voting ending no earlier than the second day before Election Day. Under the Constitution, states should have the authority to set early voting standards as they see fit. This would impede election integrity as states would face administrative hurdles in conducting early voting so close to Election Day.
- Mandate that states place early voting locations on all college campuses. This blanket mandate ignores the security, administrative, and accessibility considerations that states like Louisiana evaluate when selecting a polling location.
- Mandate that states adopt no-excuse mail-in voting. Louisiana has 13 accepted excuses to vote absentee-by-mail, including allowing voters 65 and older and disabled voters to vote absentee-by-mail. Still, the vast majority of voters (over 90%) choose to vote in-person

during our seven days of early voting or our fourteen hours of voting on federal election days. Louisianans do not want this mandate.

- Mandate that states remove election integrity measures in place on vote-by-mail ballots. This section is alarming in that states would be precluded from asking for certain identifying information or witness signatures as a means of casting a ballot. Louisiana requires both a witness signature and certain personal identifying information to confirm that the individual voting the ballot is indeed the legal, registered voter who requested the ballot. This measure ensures that votes can be verified.
- Place further restrictions on states' abilities to maintain accurate voter registration lists. Federal law already hampers states' capacity to remove ineligible individuals from their voter rolls; this legislation would make it nearly impossible and is intended to make voter rolls inaccurate and out of date.

Vice President Harris's remarks further echoed your hyperbolic statements about election integrity laws passed in other states like Georgia. After you inaccurately described Georgia's Election Integrity Act of 2021 as "Jim Crow in the 21st Century," early voting turnout increased by 212% in the 2022 midterm election. Polling by the University of Georgia found 99% of those voting in 2022 had no problems voting, with 95% saying they had "excellent" or "good" voting experiences.

The U.S. Constitution clearly reserves election administration for the states. These proposed mandates represent a gross overreach of federal authority and an abuse of your authority. Instead of taking aim at states' authority and trying to interfere in the election process, I would invite you to speak with election officials across the country, ask about our processes and procedures, and see what is really at stake. The voters' faith in our democratic process is the lifeblood of our republic—we should be working to strengthen that faith, not demolishing the very safeguards that the states have crafted to buttress it. The legislation you support and executive actions you have taken would do nothing but undermine the states and the voters.

Sincerely,



Nancy Landry

CC: Vice President Kamala Harris
Chairman Bryan Steil
Chairwoman Laurel Lee