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On Behalf Of:  
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Voting is one of the fundamental rights that defines our country, and it is crucial that we remove barriers, like in-person voting, that prevent citizens from participating in the electoral process.

This bill, which includes provisions for requesting a vote-by-mail ballot, has a flaw that undermines its intent. While the bill allows citizens to request a ballot by mail, it also requires that voters present valid government-issued ID in person at least 21 days before the election. This creates a paradox—voters cannot truly receive a ballot by mail if they are required to show up in person with identification to get one. In practice, this system forces individuals to make an in-person trip, which will not be possible for some. And, with so many mail-in voters this will increase county office staff time.

Furthermore, the requirement that mail-in ballots be received by 8 p.m. on Election Day presents another significant issue. Given that postal services, whether from the government or private carriers, are subject to delays—whether due to logistical reasons, weather-related disruptions, or other factors—requiring mailed ballots to arrive by such a specific deadline is impractical.

In our country, voter participation is not just a privilege; it is a cornerstone of our nation. Our country thrives when citizens actively engage in the process of choosing their representatives. Voting by mail has proven to be an effective means of increasing participation, particularly for those who may otherwise face barriers to in-person voting. Voting by mail not only boosts voter turnout but also reduces costs for the state and county.

Mail-in voting offers several advantages. It is private, secure, and accessible to all citizens. In fact, research has shown that mail-in voting is safer and has higher safeguards against fraud and voter intimidation than traditional polling places. For years, our state has successfully run mail-in voting systems with minimal instances of fraud. With modern systems in place, we have proven that mail-in voting works efficiently and securely.

Currently, registered voters who wish to vote by mail receive their ballots, fill them out at their convenience, and mail them back on time. This system removes the hurdles of coordinating around polling place locations and hours, inclement weather, long lines, or the necessity of taking time off work, which disproportionately affect certain voters.

There are valid reasons why someone may be unable to vote in person. Some individuals may be physically incapable of going to a polling place due to illness, injury, or mobility issues. Others may not have transportation access, may lack time due to work or family commitments, or may simply fear the safety risks that arise from in-person voting. Additionally, older voters and people with disabilities may find it impossible to endure the stress of voting at a public location. Requiring people to vote in person creates an unnecessary barrier that alienates significant portions of our voting population.

Requiring in-person voting also comes at a cost to the state and county. It involves the maintenance of polling stations, the hiring of security personnel, the setup and breakdown of voting equipment, and the software and other resources necessary to operate polling machines and places. In contrast, sending ballots by mail is far more cost-effective. The expense associated with maintaining polling stations outweighs the logistical costs of mailing out ballots and can be a considerable burden on taxpayers.

Does requiring in-person voting serve the best interests of all our citizens and our country? No. It is imperative that we preserve voting by mail, remove unnecessary in-person requirements, and ensure that every citizen can exercise their fundamental right to vote in a way that is secure, convenient, and fair. Let us prioritize accessibility, fairness, and cost-effectiveness by supporting our current mail-in process.