

# Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

September 15, 2020

Secretary of State Bev Clarno  
900 Court Street NE  
Capitol Room 136  
Salem, OR 97310-0722

Dear Secretary of State Clarno,

We write to request that your Office expeditiously develop and roll out plans to ensure that Oregonians who have lost their homes or who have been displaced due to wildfires are able to receive their ballots without delay, and are not faced with obstacles to return them for the 2020 election.

While the tragic events are still unfolding, the devastating wildfires burning in our congressional districts and across Oregon have destroyed the homes of hundreds, if not thousands, of Oregonians and many more have been displaced. We have heard directly from constituents who are concerned that they and others who have been displaced may not be able to receive and return their ballots on time.

Given that ballots for the 2020 election will be mailed out to registered Oregonian voters as soon as October 14, we request that your Office release guidance to county election officials and enhance coordination with the United States Postal Service as well as other relevant agencies and officials to ensure that displaced Oregonians are able to receive and return their ballots safely and efficiently without undue burden. We also request that you take the following into consideration to ensure that the wildfires do not prevent Oregonians from having their voice heard at the ballot box this November, as well as share your plans for how to prevent disenfranchisement:

1. Ensure that registered voters who have been displaced due to the wildfires are able to obtain replacement absentee ballots, in-person, from any election office in the State, as well as from other designated locations that are accessible to the public.
2. Use all authorities to ensure Oregon's voter registration deadline does not disenfranchise displaced Oregonians.
3. Coordinate with the Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles to ensure that those Oregonians whose essential documents – such as driver's licenses and ID cards – were destroyed in the wildfires are able to replace those documents in a timely manner.
4. Make all possible efforts to inform the public of your Office's plans to ensure displaced Oregonians are able to receive and return their ballots on time without undue burden.

As the first state to conduct a presidential election entirely by mail, Oregon has been a pioneering leader in universal mail-in ballots for twenty years. Our system, which has ensured safe, secure elections and increased voter turnout, is even more essential during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We must ensure that these devastating wildfires do not threaten the ability of Oregonians to exercise their constitutional right to vote, and we urge you and your Office to use all available resources to do so. To that end, please provide us with a briefing, no later than September 22, on the steps you are taking. Thank you in advance for your efforts to guarantee that Oregonians displaced by wildfires are not disenfranchised.

Sincerely,



Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator

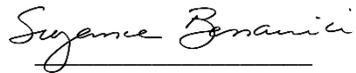


Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



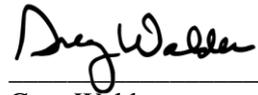
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Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



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Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



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Greg Walden  
Member of Congress



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Kurt Schrader  
Member of Congress