



## Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

11/02/2019

*UU advocacy in the nation's capital*

**Write Here! Write Now!**

**Advocacy Corps will hand-deliver letters on November 12, 2019**

**Contact:** [advocacy@uusj.org](mailto:advocacy@uusj.org) or 703-786-5206; [www.uusj.org](http://www.uusj.org) click on Advocacy

**Letter Delivery - Congregation Organizer:** Emailed letters must be received by noon on Monday, Nov. 11 [advocacy@UUSJ.org](mailto:advocacy@UUSJ.org)



**Tell Your U.S. Senators Time is Running Out! Fund Election Security for \$600 million (like the House passed)**

### WHY ARE WE WRITING NOW?

The 2020 elections are fast-approaching, and the Nation's election system remains in danger. The **Senate is currently considering funding levels for election security**. The Senate should fund election security at the same funding level as the House has approved, at \$600 million.

### BACKGROUND

Defending Our Democracy is a key priority for UUSJ. The Advocacy Corps went to Capitol Hill in March to urge Congress to restore the protections of the Voting Rights Act and to stop voter suppression. We now have an opportunity to focus on a different but equally important facet of democracy protection: election security.

The intelligence community has confirmed that Russia targeted at least 21 state election systems during the 2016 elections and that further such attempts by Russia, China, Iran, and other foreign countries were made in 2018. States and localities need significant funding now if they are to take needed steps in time for the 2020 elections, like providing auditable paper records, creating offline backups for voter records, providing adequate training for poll workers and adequate cybersecurity training for election officials.

The House has passed 10 appropriations bills, including one (H.R. 3351) that includes \$600 million in election security funding for states and localities. The full Senate is now considering appropriations bills. The relevant Senate bill (S. 2524) (voted out of committee) would provide only \$250 million in election security funding, far less than needed given the scope of the election interference problem.

### UU GROUNDING

Our 5th Principle, "The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large" compels us to advocate to protect the integrity of our national elections, the linchpin of our democratic process.

**(See other side for Key Message, Talking Points, and Sample Letter)**

## KEY MESSAGE/ASK

Congress must pass adequate funding and accountability language before the next funding deadline of November 21 (when the current continuing resolution (CR) expires) to get funding to states and localities in time to protect the 2020 election.

Promoting and protecting the democratic process is a fundamental principle of our faith. This appropriations cycle is our last chance to assure that states and localities have adequate funding in time to prevent potentially disastrous interference with the 2020 elections.

## SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS

*(use your own examples, tell your story, and/or draw on some of these suggested points)*

- **States and counties need adequate funds to secure our vote.** The Senate Bill's provision of \$250 million falls far short of what is needed to effectively deal with the dire threat of election interference. The House Bill is preferable because it provides adequate funding (\$600 million) to replace paperless voting machines and take other measures essential to prevent election interference.
- **The Senate Bill lacks important accountability provisions found in the House Bill.** The House Bill would require states that have not yet replaced paperless voting machines to do so and would provide for rigorous audits and other measures to guard against computer hacks and errors.
- **The Senate needs to act NOW to protect the 2020 elections.** States and Counties need to secure funding immediately to have enough time to implement needed protections before November 2020.

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## SAMPLE LETTER TO YOUR SENATORS

*[Use your own words. Speak from your heart -- this is only a sample letter.]*

*[Today's date]*

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_ *[name]* \_\_\_\_\_, *(write to both of your Senators)*

I'm a Unitarian Universalist from *[optional: name of congregation and location]* and I believe that election security is the backbone of our democracy.

The 2020 elections will be here soon. The Senate needs to provide adequate funds at the House approved level of \$600 million NOW so states and localities have the time to take action to secure our elections from domestic and foreign threats.

I'm concerned because .... *[insert concern such as intelligence community reports of foreign hacking; threats to the integrity of our vote, etc. or [insert your story here. What's happening in your state or local area. Why you are concerned., etc.]*

Please act now to adequately fund election security at the level the House has approved of \$600 million and include accountability measures to guard against computer hacks and errors.

*[adapt a closing such as...]* I look forward to hearing about your position to address my concern about our nation's electoral security.

Sincerely, *[YOUR NAME and include your COMPLETE ADDRESS so they know you are a constituent and how to contact you.]*

**(See other side for Why We Are Writing, Background, UU Grounding, and Instructions for Delivering Letters)**