# Benson implementing voter-approved elections improvements during pandemic

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***Calls on Legislature to support clerks and voters***

ELECTION NEWS

Michigan's elections system is safe, secure, and prepared to handle the challenges of the COVID-19 era, Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson confirmed at a press conference today. Ahead of the statewide primary next week, Benson discussed the work that has been done to strengthen election security and fully implement the election reforms voters overwhelmingly approved in 2018.

"For the past 19 months my administration has worked in partnership with local clerks and national experts to strengthen and modernize our elections system to meet the mandate of the voters," said Secretary Benson. "That work has continued even in the midst of a pandemic, and our collective efforts have made it easier to vote and harder to cheat in Michigan."

Improvements and actions carried out by Benson's administration include:

- Implementing automatic voter registration and online voter registration
- Ensuring all voters were informed of their new right to vote from home and provided an absent voter application
- Launching an online absent voter ballot application
- Expanding options for voters with disabilities to cast absent-voter ballots at home and in clerk offices
- Joining the **Electronic Registration Information Center** to improve the integrity of the state voter registration list
- Hiring the state's first election security expert
- Ensuring safe in-person voting by providing all election jurisdictions with personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies and protocols for hygiene and social distancing
- Redesigning ballot envelopes to USPS specifications and providing ballot drop boxes, and additional supplies to election jurisdictions
- Recruiting more than 5,000 election workers through the **Democracy MVP** campaign

"These are truly unprecedented times, yet our clerks, the Bureau of Elections and my administration have all worked tirelessly to ensure voting rights are protected," said Benson. "No matter how you choose to vote next week and in November, know that our elections are secure, you will be safe, and your ballot will be counted."

Benson said more progress must be made ahead of the November general election, and called on state lawmakers to do their jobs and pass laws allowing ballots postmarked by Election Day to be counted, requiring clerks to contact voters if their mailed in ballot envelope signature does not match their signature on file, and enabling clerks to begin processing ballots cast through the mail prior to Election Day.

“While we have diligently carried out the will of the voters and alongside our clerks have met every challenge thrown our way, the state legislature has passed only one piece of election-related legislation in the last 19 months,” Benson said. “With time running out, I remain hopeful legislative leaders will partner with us to support election workers and voters.”

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For media questions, contact
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