STATE OF CONNECTICUT

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

NED LAMONT

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 7LL

PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND RESPONSE – CHANGES TO PETITIONING PROCESS FOR BALLOT ACCESS

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, I issued a declaration of public health and civil preparedness emergencies, proclaiming a state of emergency throughout the State of Connecticut as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in the United States and Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to such declaration, I have issued thirty-eight (38) executive orders to suspend or modify statutes and to take other actions necessary to protect public health and safety and to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that spreads easily from person to person and may result in serious illness or death; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 is higher for individuals who are 60 or older and for those who have chronic health conditions; and

WHEREAS, to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) recommend implementation of community mitigation strategies to increase slow transmission of the virus, including cancellation of gatherings of ten people or more and social distancing in smaller gatherings; and

WHEREAS, public health experts have determined that it is possible to transmit COVID-19 even before a person shows symptoms and through aerosol transmission; and

WHEREAS, there exists a compelling interest in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among candidates seeking election, their supporters who are seeking to contact potential voters and the public at large; and

WHEREAS, the process of qualifying for ballot access through in-person petitioning as required under Title 9 of the General Statutes is a basic and vital requirement of our state constitution and our election laws, the purpose of which is to ensure that voters have the opportunity to choose

among viable candidates who have qualified for the ballot based on a minimum threshold of support, and to promote an election that is orderly, fair and transparent; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic may make it more difficult for candidates to meet the existing statutory petitioning requirements because fewer people are going outside or to public places and some people may be less willing to have in-person interactions with candidates or their supporters; and

WHEREAS, reducing the number of in-person interactions that might otherwise occur if no modifications were made to the existing petitioning statutes may help further reduce the potential transmission of COVID-19 during the ongoing public health emergency;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, NED LAMONT, Governor of the State of Connecticut, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Connecticut, do hereby **ORDER AND DIRECT** for purposes of primary and general elections conducted in 2020:

1. **Changes to the Petitioning Process for Ballot Access for Petitioning Candidates and Candidates Petitioning Under Party Designation under sections 9-453 to 9-453u**. For candidates seeking ballot access as a petitioning candidate or a candidate petitioning using a party designation, including a party designation for an existing minor party, the following provisions shall apply:

    a. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 9-453d of the General Statutes, the number of signatures required under section 9-453d of the General Statutes shall be reduced by thirty percent.

    b. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 9-453i, the deadline for filing such petitions shall be extended by two days.

    c. Notwithstanding sections 9-453a to 9-453o of the General Statutes, a petitioning signature shall be accepted as valid without attestation of the circulator or acknowledgment otherwise required if: (i) a registered voter signs a petition containing only his or her signature that is returned by U.S. mail to the candidate and later to the town clerk of the municipality or the Secretary of the State by the applicable deadline, or (ii) a registered voter signs a petition containing only his or her signature, which signature may be scanned or photographed electronically, and returned to the candidate by electronic mail and later to the town clerk of the municipality or the Secretary of the State by the applicable deadline along with a copy of the email demonstrating the electronic transmission of the petition by the registered voter. Any petition submitted in accordance with subdivisions (i) or (ii) of this subsection shall contain the information required under sections 9-453a, 9-453f and 9-453g of the General Statutes and shall include a statement by the registered voter attesting to his or her identity, and qualification as an elector and shall be signed under the penalties of false statement. If more than one signature is on a petition page, all the requirements of 9-453a to 9-

453o of the General Statutes must be satisfied, provided that any existing Executive Orders governing remote notarizations may be utilized. Nothing in this Order shall preclude petitioning by any other means set forth in section 9-453a to 9-453o of the General Statutes.

2. **Changes to the Petitioning Process for Ballot Access for Major Parties**. For a candidate for nomination of a political party to a state, district, or municipal office who has filed a single candidate committee statement under section 9-604(a) of the General Statutes or a certification under 9-604(b) of the General Statutes with the State Elections Enforcement Commission by 4:00 p.m. on May 26, 2020:

    a. Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 9-400 and 9-406 of the General Statutes, the number of signatures obtained by circulated petition otherwise required of a candidate for nomination by a political party to a state, district or municipal office shall be reduced by thirty percent.

    b. Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 9-400, 9-404a, and 9-409 of the General Statutes, the deadline for filing such petitions shall be extended by two days.

    c. Notwithstanding sections 9-404b and 9-410 of the General Statutes, a petitioning signature shall be accepted as valid without attestation of the circulator or acknowledgment otherwise required by sections 9-404b and 9-410 of the General Statutes if: (i) an enrolled party member signs a petition containing only his or her signature that is mailed by U.S. mail to the candidate and later to the registrar of the municipality by the applicable deadline; or (ii) an enrolled party member signs a petition containing only his or her signature, which signature may be scanned or photographed electronically and sent by electronic mail to the candidate and later to the registrar of the municipality by the applicable deadline along with a copy of the email demonstrating the electronic transmission of the petition by the enrolled party member. Any petition submitted in accordance with subdivisions (i) or (ii) of this subsection shall contain the information required under sections 9-404a through 9-404c, and 9-406, 9-409 and 9-410 of the General Statutes and shall include a statement by the enrolled party member attesting to his or her identity, qualification as an elector and enrolled party member and shall be signed under the penalties of false statement. If more than one signature is on a petition page, all the requirements of sections 9-404b and 9-410 of the General Statutes must be satisfied, provided that any existing Executive Orders governing remote notarizations may be utilized. Nothing in this Order shall preclude petitioning by any other means set forth in sections 9-404a through 9-404c of the General Statutes.

Unless otherwise specified herein, this order shall take effect immediately and remain in effect for the duration of the public health and civil preparedness emergency, unless earlier modified, extended or terminated.

Dated at Hartford, Connecticut, this 11th day of May, 2020.

Ned Lamont
Governor

By His Excellency's Command

Denise W. Merrill
Secretary of the State