



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 12, 2020

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor
The State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

I write today to express our concern about the impact of COVID-19 on the ongoing petitioning period for inclusion on the ballot in the June 23, 2020, New York State primary.

As you stated when declaring a State of Emergency on March 7, 2020, every New Yorker must take the necessary precautions to stop the spread of COVID-19, including social distancing. However, the petitioning process is currently under way; petitions are being circulated and must be filed with the appropriate board of elections between March 30 and April 2, 2020. As you know, the petitioning process requires candidates, volunteers, and voters to come in close contact with thousands of people to obtain access to the primary election ballot. We are concerned that the social distancing guidance may undermine the ability of both those interested in signing petitions, and those collecting them, undermining the ability of some candidates that would have otherwise met the signature threshold to do so and ultimately reducing the choices voters have.

I urge you to exercise your emergency authority to reduce by at least two-thirds the number of signatures for designating petitions. I further urge you to direct all boards of election across the state to accept submission of petitions by mail. By doing so, you would dramatically reduce the health risks to candidates and their volunteers and election personnel while continuing to allow for the robust democratic process of choosing candidates to continue.

I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter and look forward to working with you during this health crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerrold Nadler".

JERROLD NADLER
Member of Congress

REPLY TO:

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