

I am writing to you in support the "vote by mail" amendment. It is important to take action now to insure not only the health and safety of voters, but also avoid the fiscal impact on the state if more Minnesotans contract and spread the COVID-19 virus through in person voting.

The legislature should immediately release COVID-19 related federal money so the Office of the Secretary of State can take appropriate precautions to keep Minnesota voters safe. This is not a party issue, but a human necessity, as we know Minnesotans are among the most conscientious voters in the nation. Please think of the cost in human lives as well as the prospect of a second wave of closed businesses, schools and institutions after a largely in person election, costing the state economy more millions. This can be avoided with planning and processes we already know how to do safely, effectively, and securely, through our successful experiences with early voting and absentee ballots. We need to expand on these efforts, with funding now, to avoid huge costs, later. Other states have managed to do vote by mail, and this is an emergency health crisis.

As an educator, I see my students are already suffering from the disruption of their studies, their families are suffering from furloughs and layoffs, and the economic impact of this pandemic is just beginning. We do not know if exposure equals immunity, and many in person poll workers are retirees, the most susceptible group to the COVID-19 disease. Vaccines are not yet available.

Please fund these sensible voting procedural measures now to ward off future economic disaster.

--

Ruthann Godollei  
Wallace Professor  
Macalester College  
1600 Grand Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55105 USA