

August 25, 2021

SECRETARY OF STATE ARDOIN STATEMENT ON FALL 2021 ELECTIONS

BATON ROUGE, La.— The office of the Louisiana Secretary of State announced today that it will not pursue another Emergency Elections Plan for the October 9, 2021 and November 13, 2021 elections.

“In reviewing the upcoming election cycle it became clear that one of the most important factors in reaching this decision was the widespread availability of vaccines and Louisiana’s overall vaccination rate, which are both increasing daily. As such, we have no intent to issue an Emergency Elections Plan (EEP) at this time,” said Secretary Ardoin. “We have administered seven different election days since the start of COVID, including the 2020 Presidential election. Last November, 70% of all registered voters—more than 2.1 million Louisianians—made their voices heard through early voting, absentee voting, or election day voting. Over 1.9 million of those voters chose to vote in-person, a time-honored tradition in Louisiana.”

Election Worker Safety - Because of our extensive experience with past elections since the beginning of the pandemic, we are fully equipped with the appropriate PPE and sanitation standards for our election workers. These experiences have resulted in well-established protocols to administer the October and November elections, including social distancing and sanitizing voting equipment.

Health Preparations - The Louisiana Secretary of State’s office has conducted elections large and small throughout the entirety of COVID-19 and even amidst the lockdown period. Given the lessons learned in the seven elections we’ve conducted since the onset of COVID in Louisiana, we believe that we have taken appropriate steps to effectively and safely conduct these elections based on the projected turnout.

Facility Occupancy Limits - While the Governor has reinstated mask requirements, currently there are no statewide mandated occupancy limits in place in Louisiana which would impact capacity at voting precincts or early voting centers.

Early Voting - We will not be expanding early voting, as our local election administration partners, the parish Clerks and Registrars of Voters have experienced difficulty retaining commissioners and staff as a result of extended hours and days. Also, adding additional days retroactively impacts the election calendar by shortening the time between elections and brings significant costs to the process.

Absentee Voting - Our records reflect that the November 2020 presidential election, which featured a 70% overall turnout, only 3% of absentee voters used this exception. As a percentage of the total vote, the COVID exception represented only 3/10 of 1% of the voting population. The upcoming elections are projected to have a significantly smaller turnout, inclusive of the competitive municipal elections in Orleans Parish as a portion of the statewide turnout.

Legislative Intent - The option to enact Emergency Election Plans were always designed to be a temporary cure for extraordinary, but short-term obstacles. During the recently ended Legislative Session, the Louisiana Legislature

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did not see fit to take up additional measures or offer changes to our authority relative to absentee voting or the Emergency Elections Plan process.

Orleans Parish Elections - We are heartened by the [statistics](#) indicating that by the end of this week, four out of five adults in Orleans Parish will have received at least one vaccine dose.

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