

# OFFICE OF THE SELECTMEN

Secretary of State  
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March 18, 2020

Secretary Merrill,

I am writing to you as the First Selectman of the Town of Voluntown to request that you make the decision to postpone the Democratic and Republican Town Committee caucuses that are required for next week. I am also requesting that you postpone the presidential primary scheduled for the end of April.

As of yesterday, March 17, all town buildings are closed to the public for the safety of our employees who are still accessing their offices to perform essential duties. We have cancelled all town board and commission meeting for the month of March. The school, as well as the library and the firehouse, are all closed to the public. This leaves no location for both committees to hold their caucuses.

Also, being a small town, the active members of at least the Democratic Town Committee, are well in the 65+ age category for COVID-19 risk. Requiring them to meet in public is not wise. Phone or video conferencing is also not a feasible option. Getting the information out to the general public is a challenge right now for small towns. With an aging population, not many are tech savvy. In fact, we are still working on setting up the technology in our Town Hall for board and commission use of live meeting broadcasting and conference call availability to comply with the new public meeting requirements. Getting our town board and committee members, never mind the general public, to understand these changes is going to be challenging enough!

As far as the presidential primary goes, it needs to be postponed to May or June like the other states have decided to do. Like I mentioned previously, our town hall and other public buildings are closed to the public until further notice. The planning of the primary has added stress to the town clerk, as well as to the registrars, that they really don't need at this time. Going to all absentee balloting puts staff at risk. Being a small town, we are limited with our resources.

As the First Selectman, the stress of the caucuses and primary are trickling from staff and residents up to me. I am trying to protect the health and wellbeing of my staff and residents by promoting social distancing, and the caucuses and primary are promoting the opposite. Please postpone and reschedule both.

Thank you,

Tracey Hanson  
Voluntown First Selectman

Cc: Paul Mounds, Chief of Staff, Office of Governor Lamont; Bob Clark, General Counsel Office of Governor Lamont; Joe Delong, Executive Director, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities; Elizabeth Gara, Executive Director, Council of Small Towns; Shannon Wegele, Chief of Staff, Office of Secretary of the State Merrill; Senator Heather Somers; State Representative Brian Lanoue,