



July 17, 2020

The Honorable Mike Braun
374 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Braun,

As Christians, we are called to care for the frail and the elderly and to protect the most vulnerable members in society. Catholic social teaching also tells us that we have a responsibility to participate in politics out of a concern for, and commitment to, the good of the community. In a secular democracy, the right to vote is the closest thing we have to a sacrament. Catholic Sisters are keenly familiar with the challenges and the gifts that come with growing old, so we write to you out of concern and empathy for the elderly.

The COVID-19 pandemic is revealing so many ways that our nation falls short in protecting the most vulnerable. In particular, older people and people with underlying health issues are feeling discounted and endangered by risky policies and decisions that fail to put lives first. As the economy continues opening up and infection rates swell, those fearful of risking their lives feel like afterthoughts. Those at highest risk from the virus must remain in isolation and give up participating in many aspects of society to protect themselves.

But no one should have to choose between their health and their fundamental right to vote — and no one needs to if our election administrators are given the resources they need. COVID-19 has already had real and substantial impacts on several state primary elections that could have been avoided. State officials scrambled to balance public health notices and stay at home restrictions with voting rights and election turn-out. In many cases these primaries ended up confusing, endangering, frustrating, and sometimes disenfranchising, voters.

We are gravely concerned about the implications of these primaries on the general election in November. Congress must take steps now to provide states with emergency funding and guidance to address both voting rights and public safety concerns. Over 550 public health and political science experts from 47 states across the country signed an open statement about the importance of making proactive reforms to protect the health and safety of voters in the upcoming elections ([Open Letter to Protect Vulnerable Populations During the 2020 Elections](#)). There is a clear path forward to conduct fair and successful elections in the midst of a pandemic. However, that path requires Congress to pass \$3.6B in funding to support state and local authorities for necessary safety measures like:

- Expanding vote by mail options with paid postage
- Adjusting polling place operations to avoid crowds and allow for social distancing

- Recruiting a new generation of poll workers, since most are over 60 and considered high-risk
- Providing online registrations options for voters.
- Education the public about operational changes that might impact how they cast their ballots

Senator Braun, as a Catholic person of faith, we are asking you to enable each and every American to participate in our election come November. We are also reminding you of your unique responsibility to look out for the well-being of the elderly due to your position on the Joint Committee on Aging. We depend on lawmakers like you to provide our elderly and most vulnerable voters with an assurance that they will at least be able to make their voices heard by safely casting a ballot. Please pass **\$3.6B in emergency election funding** so that our general election does not become another instance where those at highest risk lose their right to participate in civil society.

Sincerely,

The more than 150 Indiana Catholic Sisters listed below

Sr. Maureen Abbott, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Rebecca Abel, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Betty Anderson, OLVM
Huntington, Indiana

Sr. Kathleen Antol, BVM
South Bend, Indiana

Sr. Bridget Arnold, OSF
Evansville, Indiana

Sr. Jean Ballard, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Nancy Bartasavich, SP
West Terre Haute, Indiana

Sr. Barbara Battista, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Judith Anne Beattie, CSC
South Bend, Indiana

Sr. Jane Becker, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Mary Beckman, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Shirley Bell, PHJC
Plymouth, Indiana

Sr. Laurette Bellamy, SP
Greenwood, Indiana

Sr. Editha Ben, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Alma Bill, OLVM
Huntington, Indiana

Sr. Kathy Bilskie, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Janet Born, OSF
Oldenburg, Indiana

Sr. Sr. Jane Breen, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Donna Butler, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Cathleen Campbell, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Deborah Campbell, SP
Beech Grove, Indiana

Sr. Ann Casper, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Clelia Cecchetti, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Brenda Cousins, CSC
Notre Dame, Indiana

Sr. Jan Craven, SP
Terre Haute, Indiana

Sr. Paula Damiano, SP
Terre Haute, Indiana

Sr. Judy Dewig, OSB
Evansville, Indiana

Sr. Judith Diltz, PHJC
Donaldson, Indiana

Sr. Susan Dinnin, SP
Indianapolis, Indiana

Sr. Ginger Downey, OLVM
Huntington, Indiana

Sr. Betty Drewes, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Mary Duffy, SP
Indianapolis, Indiana

Sr. Rose Eaton, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Ruth Eggering, OSF
Oldenburg, Indiana

Sr. Brenda Engleman, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Marjorie English, OSF
Oldenburg, Indiana

Sr. Carole Fedders, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Diane Fischer, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana, Indiana

Sr. Mary Fleig, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Dolores Folz, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Christa Franzer, OSF
Oldenburg, Indiana

Sr. Mary Full, CSC
South Bend, Indiana

Sr. Lorraine Geis, OSF
Oldenburg, Indiana

Sr. Rita Gerardot, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Mary Andre Gettelfinger, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Annette Grisley, OSF
Oldenburg, Indiana

Sr. Jeanne Hagelskamp, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Beatrice Haines, OLVM
Huntington, Indiana

Sr. Gail Hamilton, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Claire Hanson, SP
West Terre Haute, Indiana

Sr. Mary Hennel, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Donna Herr, OSB
Evansville, Indiana

Sr. Mary Lee Hillenbrand, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Marilyn Hofer, OSF
Oldenburg, Indiana

Sr. Sharon Hollander, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Kathleen Hood, SND
Indianapolis, Indiana

Sr. Susan Hooks, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Jennifer Horner, OSB
Beech Grove, Indiana

Sr. Jenny Howard, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Ann Howard, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Kathryn Huber, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Emma Jochum, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Karen Joseph, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Rose Kaiser, OLVM
Huntington, Indiana

Sr. Rebecca Keller, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Jean Kenny, SP
Indianapolis, Indiana

Sr. Carole Kimes, SP
Indianapolis, Indiana

Sr. Mary Carol Kinghorn, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Jackie Kissel, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Mary Beth Klingel, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. RosaLee Koch, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Joanita Koors, OSF
Oldenburg, Indiana

Sr. Betty Koressel, SP
West Terre Haute, Indiana

Sr. Albertine Kramer, CSC
Notre Dame, Indiana

Sr. Constance Kramer, SP
Indianapolis, Indiana

Sr. Jan Kroeger, OSF
Oldenburg, Indiana

Sr. Louise Laroche, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Patty Lasher, OSB
Saint Meinrad, Indiana

Sr. Mary Lechner, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN,
Indiana

Sr. Anita Louise Lowe, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Joni Luna, SP
West Terre Haute, Indiana

Sr. Mary Beth Maier, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Katherine Manley, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Doris Market, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Lucille Martinez, OLVM
Huntington, Indiana

Sr. Becky Mathauer, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Mary Ann McCauley, SP
Clinton, Indiana

Sr. Patricia McGuire, OSB
Evansville, Indiana

Sr. Gloria Memering, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Rosie Miller, OSF
Oldenburg, Indiana

Sr. Joan Miller, OSF
Shelbyville, Indiana

Sr. Jennifer Miller, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Michelle Mohr, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Marie Molloy, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Mary Montgomery, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Mary Morley, SP
Cincinnati, Indiana

Sr. Mary Mundy, SP
Evansville, Indiana

Sr. Jolinda Naas, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Mary Jo Nelson, OLVN
Huntington, Indiana

Sr. Jeanne Niehaus, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Carol Nolan, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Rosemary Nudd, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Anna O'Connor, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Mary O'Neil, SP
Terre Haute, Indiana

Bro. Bob Overland, FS
Merrillville, Indiana

Sr. Noella Poinsette, OSF
Oldenburg, Indiana

Sr. Jannette Pruitt, OSF
Oldenburg, Indiana

Sr. Joan Pytlik, DC
Evansville, Indiana

Sr. Eileen Reckelhoff, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Barbara Reder, SP
Brownsburg, Indiana

Sr. Alice Rhinesmith, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Marianne Ridgell, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Cathy Ann Robinson, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Helen Rodriguez-Marin, OLVN
Huntington, Indiana

Sr. Mary Rogers, DC
Evansville, Indiana

Sr. Mary Lou Ruck, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Doris Schepers, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Rosemary Schmalz, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Barbara C Schmitz, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Edith Schneider, PHJC
Donaldson, Indiana

Sr. Catherine Schneider, OSF
Indianapolis, Indiana

Sr. Marilyn Schroering, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Rose Anne Schultz, CSC
Notre Dame, Indiana

Sr. Paulette Seng, OSB
ferdinand, ind., Indiana

Sr. Karlene Sensmeier, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Mary Sermersheim, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Harriet Ann Shaw, CSC
Notre Dame, Indiana

Sr. Jacqueline Shively, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Michelle Sinkhorn, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Marie Esther Sivertsen, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Elizabeth Smoyer, SNDdeN
Mishawaka, Indiana

Sr. Marsha Speth, SP
West Terre Haute, Indiana

Sr. Lisa Stallings, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Emily TeKolste, SP
West Terre Haute, Indiana

Sr. Dawn Tomaszewski, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Mary Trippel, PHJC
Donaldson, Indiana

Sr. Judith Turnock, OLVM
Huntington, Indiana

Sr. Mary Ann Verkamp, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Jeana Visel, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Jessica Vitente, SP
Indiana, Indiana

Sr. Rose Marie Weckenmann, OSF
Oldenburg, Indiana

Sr. Agnes Weinzapfel, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Martha Wessel, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Rachel West, OSF
Oldenburg, Indiana

Sr. Charlene Wheelless, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Marge White, SSJ-TOSF
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Sr. Therese Whitsett, SP
Indianapolis, Indiana

Sr. Arrienne Whittaker, SP
Indianapolis, Indiana

Sr. Veronica Wiedower, CSC
Notre Dame, Indiana

Sr. Rose Wildeman, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Mary Wilkinson, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Jane Will, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Mary Williams, OSB
Ferdinand, Indiana

Sr. Marge Wissman, OSF
Batesville, Indiana

Sr. Beth Wright, SP
Terre Haute, Indiana

Sr. Hueiru Norene Wu, SP
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Sr. Monica Zore, OSF
Indianapolis, Indiana