

COVID-19 Update - 08/17/2020

ELECTIONS

Today, the CTCA and ROVAC conducted a virtual meeting with Secretary Merrill, Deputy Secretary Bates and the Secretary's Chief of Staff and Elections Director regarding the November 3, 2020 Presidential Election.

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8/18
dated
8/17
6:53 P.M*

During the meeting the Secretary announced that her office will mail each eligible voter an absentee ballot application in the coming weeks. However, Secretary Merrill will NOT hire a mailing house to process and mail the absentee ballots centrally. The absentee ballot fulfillment process will be handled locally by each town clerk.

The CTCA expressed concerns for the sheer volume of applications we stand to process leading up to the election. This undertaking will be very similar to the Department of Labor in their effort to process thousands of unemployment claims this past spring for the residents of our state.

This unilateral decision now confers onto TCs the task of processing thousands of absentee ballots applications with very little to time to prepare the resources needed to accomplish this colossal undertaking. Staff will need to be hired and trained on how to enter the data from each absentee ballot application and to select the correct district ballot while preparing the absentee ballot set for the voters. We will need to find office space large enough to allow for social distancing measures and is equipped with the infrastructure to handle several computers.

During the meeting we insisted that efficiencies needed to be made to CVRS as the most recent software update was specifically generated to facilitate the mail house data merges. For the November election, we are insisting that labels are generated automatically. Based on the sheer volume of applications we cannot utilize a system with built-in inefficiencies that not only requires the user to enter the voter's unique information but also requires clicking on several options and then proceed to a new screen to select the ballot again and click on generate labels. It is about 5

steps/clicks too many. Efficiency is critical in getting the ballots out to the voters.

SOTS stated that each town could have up to 20 users assigned to CVRS. The CTCA expressed concerns about the ability of CVRS to handle increased number of users. On the evening that TCs had to re-issue 20,000 absentee ballots the system was running very slow, the label printers were not functioning and the system was crashing for many users. These issues occurred with 2 to 5 users per town on the system simultaneously. SOTS has promised to increase the bandwidth to allow for additional users to work simultaneously. Tests will be performed to determine the capabilities of CVRS to handle additional users.

Additionally, we addressed the issue that Town Clerks do not have a sufficient supply of absentee ballot envelopes for issuing absentee ballots to voters in November. As you may recall, the Secretary's new office location does not have storage space for election supplies and absentee ballot envelopes. All deliveries will come directly from the printer after the print job is completed. Please check your supplies immediately and communicate to your Elections Team your inventory needs.

Additionally, the CTCA will express the need for Secretary to provide consistent, written communication to all Town Clerks regarding processes and resolutions for issues that arise along the way.

The CTCA has identified the following information that requires an immediate answer and needs to be communicated to all Town Clerks:

- 1.) When will SOTS send an application to every eligible voter in the State?
- 2.) What efficiencies can be made to CVRS and when it will be available?
- 3.) When can TCs expect additional supplies of absentee ballot envelopes?
- 4.) What funds will cities and towns receive to process the absentee ballot applications?

In our country elections are the backbone of our democracy, and it's of the utmost importance that elections are successfully administered in a year marred with constant crisis. I cannot stress the importance of preparing, making a well-thought

out and comprehensive plan, and executing against it. Please take what little time we have to meet with you municipal CEO to discuss the resources you desperately need to successfully administer this election.

The voters of Connecticut deserve to have their voices heard.

Stay healthy. Stay CTCA strong.

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