

Committees:

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State Boards & Commissions

Ohio Commission on Fatherhood, Vice President
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Ohio Advisory Council on Aging
Attorney General's Human Trafficking Commission

Office: 614-466-8030

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THOMAS E. WEST

State Representative | 49th Ohio House District

August 24, 2020

Governor Mike DeWine

Vern Riffe Center

77 S High St, 30th Floor

Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Governor DeWine,

Firstly, thank you for your continued leadership of our great state through the Covid-19 pandemic. I hope this finds you, the First Lady and your family well. I write to you today to ask that you consider deploying members of the Ohio National Guard as poll workers for this November's election, given the potential shortage we may experience as our battle with the pandemic continues.

As the election nears, we continue to hear reports of those who traditionally serve as poll workers being concerned about doing so for this year's election. Just two days ago, my hometown paper the *Canton Repository* [reported](#) that of 1,000 former poll workers who responded to a survey from the Stark County Board of Elections, only 54% indicated they were willing to serve again, while 35% said they would not and 10% weren't sure. As you know, this survey was issued in accordance with Secretary of State Frank LaRose's early July order asking boards of elections to assess inventory of poll worker commitments.

At that time, Secretary LaRose warned that we would not be able to open all 4,000 of our state's polling locations if the 88 boards of elections couldn't field the required 35,000 poll workers. Earlier this week, he echoed his call for Ohioans to sign up to serve as poll workers on *The Today Show* to ensure that does not become a reality. As his office receives more survey results from county boards, we will be able to get a fuller picture of poll worker inventory, but I am growing increasingly concerned that other county boards will receive results similar to mine.

With this in mind, I would urge that you consider deploying the Ohio National Guard to help fill any shortage in poll workers that may exist across the state. Our National Guard members have performed admirably since you deployed them to aid in our state's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. As you know better than anyone, their support of our foodbanks, long-term care facilities, PPE collection efforts, and medical surge capacity has been transformative in Ohio's fight against this vicious virus.

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Should the need still exist, I know they will answer the call again and help ensure that every voter who desires to cast their ballot in person has the opportunity to do so at their precinct's polling location. We simply must ensure that every voter feels their voice can be heard in this election, despite the severe circumstances. Again, as we continue to get more information on where our counties stand with poll worker inventory, I ask that you give this proposal careful consideration.

As always, you are welcome to reach out to me personally at 330-268-1789 or thomas.west@ohiohouse.gov if you'd like to discuss this matter further. Thank you for your attention to my request, Governor, and take good care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas E. West". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Thomas E. West

State Representative

49th Ohio House District

Cc: Secretary of State Frank LaRose