

The August 14<sup>th</sup> Vermont Primary Election is only a few short weeks away. Unfortunately, many of us are anticipating a pretty low turnout this year, but I'm hoping you can help us make sure that's not the case!

Voting is the bedrock of our democracy. When you go to the polls on Election Day, you're helping shape the future of our towns, our state, and our country. Make sure to get out and vote!

Unfortunately, since the early 2000s, we've seen an increased effort across the country to suppress the vote and block access to the ballot box.

That's not the case in Vermont! I'm proud of the many things we've done in this state to ensure access to the ballot box for eligible voters. From same-day voter registration to automatic voter registration we're breaking down barriers to voting for eligible voters.

Early voting is one of the best ways to increase voter access, and even right now you can vote early for the August Primary, either in-person at your local Town or City Clerk's office, or by requesting a ballot be mailed to you. Requests can be made by phone, email, walk-in or online at <https://mvp.sec.state.vt.us>. Make sure your ballot is returned to your municipal clerk by 7pm on Election Day to ensure it's counted. Don't wait until the last minute!

We are also in the process of implementing a new accessible voting system, which will allow voters with disabilities to vote privately and independently, both at the polls and from home during the early voting period. All voters deserve to be able to vote their ballot in private!

Ever since the news broke that Russian military intelligence service hackers targeted 21 states, successfully breaching one and receiving access to the sensitive private personal information of approximately 500,000 American voters, election cybersecurity has been thrown into the spotlight. Vermont was not one of the states targeted. Of the 21 states targeted, 20 successfully defended against those attacks, and based on all of the information we have received from our federal partners, we have no reason to believe that any votes were changed.

However, we know that the bad actors came for us once, and they will again. I want to assure you that cybersecurity is something I take very seriously. In Vermont there are a number of important steps we have taken to protect our elections against cyberattacks, such as:

- An auditable paper ballot trail for every vote cast in Vermont
- Random audits following General Elections
- Decentralized elections management, where vote tabulators are not connected to the internet, to each other, or to any external device either by Wi-Fi or hardwire
- Daily backup of our voter registration rolls
- Monitoring of internet traffic to all our systems
- Blacklisting known problem IP addresses
- Installation of a real-time "Albert" monitor which constantly monitors our system and reports on suspicious activity
- Periodic penetration testing
- Weekly Department of Homeland Security cyber-hygiene scans
- "Secure the Human" trainings with municipal clerks, who are the front lines of our elections, and the implementation of two-factor authentication for any user who has access to our voter registration and election management system.

We work every day to protect our elections, and that work won't stop. The entire U.S. intelligence community is unified that the Russians attacked our 2016 Election, and will try again.

To that end, states need dedicated, ongoing funding to ensure the integrity of our elections now and into the future. We were successful, with the support of Senator Patrick Leahy and others in Congress, in [securing \\$380 million \(\\$3 million for Vermont\) in Help America Vote Act funds to be used for election cybersecurity and election infrastructure upgrades in states.](#)

Cybersecurity is not a one-time expense though. It is a race without a finish line. We're urging Congress to secure smaller, ongoing annual maintenance grants for states to keep this work moving forward in a sustainable way.

We can't envision a better investment than our democracy!

So make sure to get out and vote on August 14<sup>th</sup>! [If you don't know your polling place, you can find it here.](#) The polls will be open until 7pm, and don't forget that you can vote early with your municipal clerk during regular business hours every day up until the election.

We work hard to push out accurate voter information on both [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), so give us a follow to stay up to date. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to get in touch with us there!

See you at the polls!