GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

May 11, 2020

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF STATE
5:30PM O'CLOCK
MAY 11 2020
Secretary of State

The Honorable Ruth R. Hughs
Secretary of State
State Capitol Room 1E.8
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Secretary Hughs:

Pursuant to his powers as Governor of the State of Texas, Greg Abbott has issued the following:

A proclamation concerning early voting for special elections to occur on July 14, 2020.

The original of this proclamation is attached to this letter of transmittal.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Davidson
Executive Clerk to the Governor

GSD/gsd

Attachment



EXHIBIT
A

# PROCLAMATION

BY THE

# Governor of the State of Texas

**TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME:**

WHEREAS, I, Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas, issued a disaster proclamation on March 13, 2020, certifying under Section 418.014 of the Texas Government Code that the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) poses an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the State of Texas; and

WHEREAS, on April 12, 2020, I issued a proclamation renewing the disaster declaration for all counties in Texas; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Dr. John Hellerstedt, has determined that COVID-19 represents a public health disaster within the meaning of Chapter 81 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, and renewed that determination on April 17, 2020; and

WHEREAS, I have issued executive orders, proclamations, and suspensions of Texas laws in response to the COVID-19 disaster, aimed at protecting the health and safety of Texans and ensuring an effective response to this disaster; and

WHEREAS, I issued a proclamation on March 16, 2020, ordering a special election on July 14, 2020, to fill the vacancy in Texas State Senate District No. 14; and

WHEREAS, on March 20, 2020, I issued a proclamation postponing the runoff primary election date from May 26, 2020, to July 14, 2020; and

WHEREAS, I also issued a proclamation suspending Sections 41.0052(a) and (b) of the Texas Election Code and Section 49.103 of the Texas Water Code to the extent necessary to allow political subdivisions that would otherwise hold elections on May 2, 2020, to move their general and special elections for 2020 only to the next uniform election date, occurring on November 3, 2020; and

WHEREAS, I subsequently issued proclamations on April 2, April 6, April 8, and May 8, 2020, authorizing certain political subdivisions to call emergency special elections on July 14, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Texas law provides that eligible voters have a right to cast a vote in person; and

WHEREAS, as counties across Texas prepare for the upcoming elections on July 14, 2020, and establish procedures for eligible voters to exercise their right to vote in person, it is necessary that election officials implement health protocols to conduct elections safely and to protect election workers and voters; and

WHEREAS, in order to ensure that elections proceed efficiently and safely when Texans go to the polls to cast a vote in person during early voting or on election day, it is necessary to increase the number of days in which polling locations will be open during the early voting period, such that election officials can implement appropriate social distancing and safe hygiene practices; and

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WHEREAS, Section 85.001(a) of the Texas Election Code provides that the period for early voting by personal appearance begins 17 days before election day; and

WHEREAS, Section 85.001(b) of the Texas Election Code provides that the period for early voting for a runoff primary election begins 10 days before election day; and

WHEREAS, in consultation with the Texas Secretary of State, it has become apparent that strict compliance with the statutory requirements relating to the duration of early voting contained in Sections 85.001(a) and 85.001(b) of the Texas Election Code would prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with the COVID-19 disaster; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 418.016 of the Texas Government Code, the Governor has the express authority to suspend the provisions of any regulatory statute prescribing the procedures for conduct of state business or the orders or rules of a state agency if strict compliance with the provisions, orders, or rules would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with a disaster.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GREG ABBOTT, Governor of Texas, under the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Texas, do hereby suspend Sections 85.001(a) and 85.001(b) of the Texas Election Code to the extent necessary to require that, for any election ordered or authorized to occur on July 14, 2020, early voting by personal appearance shall begin on Monday, June 29, 2020, and shall continue through the fourth day before election day, excluding any legal state or federal holidays. I further amend the proclamations issued on April 2, April 6, April 8, and May 8, 2020, authorizing emergency special elections, and the proclamation issued on March 16, 2020, ordering a special election to fill the vacancy in Texas State Senate District No. 14, so as to require that for each of these elections to be held on July 14, 2020, early voting by personal appearance shall begin on Monday, June 29, 2020, in accordance with the above suspension.

The Secretary of State shall take notice of this proclamation and shall transmit a copy of this order immediately to every County Judge of this state and all appropriate writs will be issued and all proper proceedings will be followed to the end that said elections may be held and their results proclaimed in accordance with law.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereto signed my name and have officially caused the Seal of State to be affixed at my office in the City of Austin, Texas, this the 11th day of May, 2020.

GREG ABBOTT
Governor of Texas

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ATTESTED BY:

RUTH R. HUGHS
Secretary of State

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