 

**VIRTUAL POSTCARD PARTY #169 April 17, 2020**

To stay on top of COVID-19 announcements and happenings in NC, Gov. Cooper has set up a useful text messaging system. To enroll, just text COVIDNC to 898211.

**FEDERAL**

Note: with great gratitude and admiration we honor the many heroes of the COVID-19 crisis. Many of the items below concern these folks and the work they do. These include postal workers, all healthcare personnel, first responders, agricultural and grocery workers, state and local government personnel, and the free press, among others. You may want to refer to heroes of the present day in your emails or letters to the editor.

**FUND THE SURVIVAL OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE**

The United State Postal Service serves a vital role, enshrined in the Constitution, that cannot and should not be usurped by privatization, which Trump and Republicans continue to pursue during the COVID-19 crisis. The USPS has been underfunded for decades and has been further challenged by the pandemic, which makes its linking of the whole of the U.S. even more critical. Its role would also be integral to making national vote by mail effective. The next multi-billion dollar relief bill must include adequate support for the USPS, estimated to be at least $25 billion.

**Email Sen. Thom Tillis and Sen. Richard Burr to underscore how essential the USPS is to North Carolina and the whole country and to tell them they need to vote twice for adequate funding for the USPS in the next relief bill. Once to pass a truly bipartisan bill that helps small businesses, the USPS, state and local governments, plus $3.6 billion for national vote by mail infrastructure. And a second time to overcome a spiteful presidential veto.**

**Use the online Contact Us options for WLOS, WYFF, WSPA, WHNS, WUNF, the Hendersonville Times-News, The Lightning, The Asheville Citizen Times, & Mountain Xpress to underscore how essential the USPS is to North Carolina and the whole country and that Sen. Tillis and Sen. Burr need to vote for adequate funding for the USPS in the next relief bill.**

**NATIONAL VOTE BY MAIL**

National Vote By Mail is fair, universal, and feasible. The federal government can require vote by mail for a national election. The uncertainties of the pandemic make a compelling case for instituting nation-wide vote by mail for the November election. Fourteen states still don’t allow no-excuse absentee voting. Most other states haven’t adopted mail-in voting as their core system. Most states have to act quickly to pass legislation to address state-specific legal issues and to set up the infrastructure to make vote by mail work. S. 26 (and other bills) have been offered to mandate and implement national vote by mail this year. It’s been estimated that the Congress has to act by May to pass the needed bill for states to have enough time to carry out the law, just to order sufficient envelopes and paper for ballots, for instance. Along with this tight timetable, Congress must include $3.6 billion in the next relief bill to fund the states’ costs and another $25 billion (approximately) for the USPS to survive.

**Email Sen. Thom Tillis and Sen. Richard Burr to tell them they need to vote twice for national vote by mail, as well as for adequate funding for the states and the USPS in the next relief bill. Once to pass a truly bipartisan bill that requires vote by mail in national elections, along with the necessary funding. And a second time to overcome a spiteful presidential veto.**

**Use the online Contact Us options for the listed media outlets to underscore how essential national vote by mail is to North Carolina and the whole country and that Sen. Tillis and Sen. Burr need to vote for national vote by mail, along with the necessary funding.**

**SAY NO TO KING DONALD**

The pretender king Donald tells our country “When somebody’s the President of the United States, the authority is total. And that’s the way it’s gotta be. It’s total. And the governors know that.” The Constitution and dozens of Supreme Court decisions say otherwise: the president is not beyond and above the law. The president and his top administration have abdicated their responsibilities and their just and rightful emergency authorities in a failed response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The recovery, therefore, cannot rely primarily on the federal government. The recovery will depend on the public health community at all levels, healthcare providers everywhere, the governors, and the employers and workers who must weigh when, how, and whether to start up economic activities again. Governors have the authority to decide when and how to allow non-essential businesses and activities to reopen. (Since Trump never issued a national stay-at-home order, most governors and many local officials took the necessary actions to protect our communities.) The president cannot order anyone to reopen or go back to work. The president and Attorney General Bill Barr may think Trump is a monarch, but actually he’s an ugly ineffectual butterfly fluttering where his winds carry him.

**Email Sen. Thom Tillis and Sen. Richard Burr to tell them they need to forcefully remind the world that the Constitution reserves powers to the states that are not explicitly delegated to the federal government. A primary state responsibility is public safety, which includes protecting the public health. One may also ask the Senators to reply whether they support the installation of king Donald I.**

**Use the online Contact Us options for the listed media outlets to underscore how, under the Constitution, the governors will decide when to allow non-essential businesses and activities to resume. As Trump said, “I take no responsibility." Without responsibility there can be no authority.**

**SAY YES TO THE FIRST AMENDMENT: HONOR THE FREE PRESS**

The pretender king Donald tells our country “When somebody’s the President of the United States, the authority is total. And that’s the way it’s gotta be. It’s total. And the governors know that.” The Constitution and dozens of Supreme Court decisions say otherwise: the president is not beyond and above the law. More than sixty years ago Joseph Welch said to Sen. Joseph McCarthy “You've done enough. Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?” Yesterday Kaitlan Collins (CNN) responded to the pretender king: “…That is not true. Who told you that?” Her words will live forever. A free press seeks the truth and publishes it.

**Email Sen. Thom Tillis and Sen. Richard Burr to tell them to stand up for our free press and to tell Donald Trump that he has become an enemy of the people by sliming the brave and honest reporters working in every media and every locality who seek the truth and don’t allow themselves to be bullied.**

**Use the online Contact Us options for the listed media outlets to underscore how essential our free press is to North Carolina and the whole country.**

**STATE**

**EXPAND MEDICAID IN NORTH CAROLINA**

North Carolina desperately needs Medicaid Expansion to save lives and protect our hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic. Right now more than 1 million North Carolinians are uninsured, and our hospitals desperately need the $2 billion in federal funds that Medicaid Expansion will bring in. We are ALL at risk when any of our neighbors, family members, or friends can't get the care they need.

**Contact Speaker Moore and Senate President Pro Tem Berger directly and demand that they work with Governor Cooper to address this pandemic – by expanding Medicaid. Contact Sen. Chuck Edwards and Rep. Chuck McGrady to tell them to move their caucus to support Medicaid Expansion.**

**Use the online Contact Us options for the listed media outlets to tell them that North Carolinians and our hospitals must be assisted by passing Medicaid Expansion now.**

**MAKE VOTING BY MAIL IN NORTH CAROLINA HAPPEN THIS NOVEMBER**

The North Carolina State Board of Elections (SBOE) is trying to facilitate every citizen’s right to vote this November, when the COVID-19 pandemic is extremely likely to still be a profound emergency. The SBOE has recommended that NC modify absentee and in-person voting policies to comply with social distancing. Republican lawmakers reject necessary changes that support our rights, because they would rather cheat than compete in fair elections. We’ve sent a separate emergency email about the SBOE’s virtual hearing on 4/20 on these issues; **PLEASE PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THE AVAILABLE WAYS ON 4/20**. [Thanks to Lola Benfield and NextGen North Carolina for addressing this issue in the April 15 issue of Mountain Xpress.]

**Contact Speaker Moore and Senate President Pro Tem Berger directly and demand that they work with Governor Cooper to address this pandemic – by making voter registration actually available to all eligible people and by making vote by mail available for all voters. Contact Sen. Chuck Edwards and Rep. Chuck McGrady to tell them to move their caucus to support these steps. Contact Gov. Roy Cooper to tell him he needs to throw his support and negotiating skills behind this effort, and thank him for what he has done so far to make it happen.**

**Use the online Contact Us options for the listed media outlets to tell them that North Carolinians must be fully enfranchised to vote now, taking into account the emergency our heroes put their lives on the line to combat.**