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| **POSTCARD PARTY (VIRTUAL) 168       APRIL 10, 2020Fair Elections**(From [www.DemandProgress.org](http://www.demandprogress.org/)) The coronavirus is already causing havoc with our elections making it clear we need to give every voter the option to vote by mail.Wisconsin is the latest example. After Governor Tony Evers ordered a postponement of their primary election to June, in order to protect public health, Republicans on the Wisconsin Supreme Court and then the conservative majority on the U.S. Supreme Court ordered today's election to go ahead anyway despite safety concerns. We cannot let this happen on a national scale this fall.We need the November 2020 election to go ahead as planned - safely and securely. The best way to ensure that election takes place is to act now, while we still have time, to ensure every American voter can cast a ballot by mail. Will you help? If you're concerned about the possibility the November election might be postponed, the best thing you can do right now is tell your members of Congress to pass legislation guaranteeing every American the ability to vote by mail this fall.Tell Congress: Pass a national vote by mail law!Even if the coronavirus pandemic fades in the coming weeks, there is still the possibility it could return in the fall. We cannot sit back and just wait for a crisis that could undermine the November election.Congress has several bills pending that would give every voter the option to vote by mail. Democratic leaders chose not to pass such a requirement as part of the recent bailout, despite intense public pressure to do so. That was a mistake.Donald Trump has already said he doesn't like vote by mail. But we know it works well. Washington State, and now Oregon, have voted by mail, the former for years. It's a safe and secure way to cast a ballot. American voters don't have to choose between democracy and public health, and the mail-ballot states haven't had to postpone elections. But very few Americans have that option if they live elsewhere. Also: The Director of the NC State Board of Elections favors extensive changes for this fall’s voting, including consideration of vote-by-mail, online requests and prepaid postage for absentee ballots, and poll site changes.[https://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/politics-government/article241861541.html](http://%20https//www.charlotteobserver.com/news/politics-government/article241861541.html)Write to our State Representatives Chuck McGrady and Jake Johnson, NC Senator Chuck Edwards and Governor Cooper to support extensive rework and funding of the fall election to increase voter safety.**Medicare Coverage (From PHNP)**PHNP has said that private health insurance is like an umbrella that melts in the rain. And now our health system faces a storm unlike any we’ve seen before. In the midst of an economic meltdown, what will happen to the millions of Americans who rely on workplace health coverage?It’s important to recognize that many laid-off workers never had health coverage to begin with. These figures understate the full coverage losses, since they don’t include dependent family members who lose coverage because of a breadwinner's job loss, or coverage losses among self-employed workers who did not file unemployment claims.Coverage losses will be steeper in the 14 states that have refused to expand Medicaid (NC being one) under the ACA. In those states, 22.6% of the newly-unemployed are likely to lose all coverage, in addition to the 15.8% who were uninsured even when they were working, raising the uninsurance rate among job losers to nearly 40%. In states that did expand Medicaid, 8.3% of those with jobs are uninsured, and an additional 13.8% of those who lose jobs lose coverage.To quickly get more people covered, states that have not yet expanded Medicaid should do so immediately. However, because each state’s spending is limited to its annual tax revenues - which are rapidly plummeting during this recession - aggressive action must be taken at the federal level. The folly of tying health coverage to employment never been more clear.Write to our State Representatives Chuck McGrady and Jake Johnson, NC Senator Chuck Edwards and Governor Cooper to expand Medicaid ASAP.**Coronavirus testing**NPR reports that Federal support for Coronavirus testing sites is terminating Friday. DHHS contends there are local authorities able to take up the burden of resourcing the test sites. But local authorities say that is not always so. There is no path to a containment strategy without expansive testing! Express your concern that this can multiply hot spots, nationally and in North Carolina. (Cite <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/04/08/829955099/federal-support-for-coronavirus-testing-sites-end-as-peak-nears> )**Using Crisis for Power Grabs**It’s hard, for instance, to find any other explanation for the announcement, last Thursday, that the EPA would be relaxing environmental rules for power plants and factories, which will now be on the honor system to report their own violations of clean air and water rules. Which raises questions about why immigrants and asylum-seekers cannot similarly be advised to just “‘act responsibly’ if they cannot currently comply with rules,” but, well, there it is. Of course, it’s not just environmental protections that are to be consigned to the dustbin. The stimulus bill passed contains several provisions reducing regulations on the banking sector—deregulatory actions that have been “long sought” by finance industry lobbyists. But according to a Washington Post report, numerous proposals to help banking consumers during the crisis didn’t make the cut. That included “a proposal to scrap bank overdraft fees; another to impose a 36 percent cap on consumer interest rates; and one to offer free bank accounts, accessible at a bank or the Post Office.” None of those, it seemed, made it in, even though we could find room for a provision delaying accounting rules that would require banks to more accurately report their liabilities It seems that the coronavirus also necessitated that the Labor Department suspend affirmative action rules for a time. On Monday, HHS admitted it was using the pandemic as an excuse to hastily deport immigrant children apprehended alone at the southern border as opposed to housing them in shelters to await processing. And don’t even get us started on Republican governors in Ohio, Texas, and Mississippi who are using the coronavirus emergency to attempt to shutter abortion clinics, in some cases with threats of jail time for offering nonessential services during a pandemic. (So far, abortion providers in these states have continued offering their essential medical care.). There is no specific action tied to this section....save, of course, to be on the alert for usurpation of rights and flat-out power grabs at all levels of government, under the guise of “We are in a crisis!”.  Above all, be alert for any attempt to delay or cancel the November elections – SCOTUS has already signaled that the Constitution and precedent are of little importance. |
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