

**October 13, 2020**

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL OPPOSES TEXAS ORDER DRASTICALLY LIMITING NUMBER OF  
BALLOT DROP-OFF SITES**

***Raoul, Coalition Argue That Limiting Drop-Off Sites Could Make Voting More Difficult and  
Compromise Public Health***

**Chicago** — Attorney General Kwame Raoul joined a group of 19 state attorneys general supporting a challenge to a Texas executive proclamation that limits the number of absentee ballot drop-off sites to one per county and shuts sites that already were open. A group of Texas voters and organizations advocating for voters' rights filed a lawsuit claiming that reducing the number of drop-off sites threatens voters' ability to vote and compromises their health during the pandemic by forcing them to potentially travel long distances to cast their ballots.

[In a brief filed](#) in *Texas League of United Latin American Citizens v. Hughs* in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit, Raoul and the coalition oppose the proclamation, arguing that states have a responsibility to tailor their election rules to protect voter participation and voter safety during the pandemic. The brief also argues that voter fraud is extremely rare, and making voting more accessible through drop-off sites does not lead to widespread fraud.

"There is no evidence to support claims that submitting ballots using drop-boxes would create fraud," Raoul said. "This executive proclamation makes it more difficult for people to exercise their right to vote and potentially forces voters to risk their health during a pandemic by forcing them to traveling long distances to cast their ballots."

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, states across the country have modified election procedures to protect voter participation and the health of voters and election workers. Expanding access to absentee ballot drop-off sites is a solution adopted by many states, especially in light of operational changes at the U.S. Postal Service that threaten crucial mail delivery. Raoul is part of a coalition of attorneys general who have filed a lawsuit to stop cuts that threaten mail service and could undermine the election. The court granted a preliminary injunction preventing the drastic changes; however, ballot drop-off sites remain an important option for voters who do not want to send ballots via the Postal Service.

On Oct. 1, after absentee voting had already begun, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott issued an executive proclamation limiting absentee ballot drop-off boxes to one per county, claiming the move is necessary to prevent voter fraud. A group of Texas voters and voting rights organizations filed a lawsuit to block the reduction of drop-off sites, arguing that the order threatens the health of voters and could suppress votes. A federal district court blocked Abbott's proclamation, and the Texas secretary of state appealed to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals.

In the amicus brief, Raoul and the coalition support the plaintiffs' challenge to reducing the number of absentee ballot drop-off sites because:

- **States have a responsibility to protect voter participation and voter safety:** States have the power to regulate elections and must do so in ways that preserve the right to vote. The overwhelming majority of states acknowledge that the risks to public health during this pandemic require accommodations to make distanced voting more accessible and safer. Many states have worked to make the collection of absentee ballots reliable and safe, including by expanding the

availability of ballot drop-off sites. Access to safe drop-off sites is particularly important in states like Texas, where elderly and disabled residents are among the only voters eligible to vote absentee.

- **Reducing drop-off sites would disproportionately harm communities of color:** Black and Latino communities have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, both nationally and in Texas. Studies show that Latino voters are more likely than others to face transportation challenges, making trips to these single locations difficult. These voters are also disproportionately more likely to be essential workers, meaning they may be denied the time and flexibility to seek out – and wait in line at – distant drop-off sites.
- **Voter fraud is rare, and there is no evidence that limiting drop-off sites prevents it:** Since 2000, more than 250 million people in all 50 states have voted using mail-in ballots, and in the 2016 presidential election, approximately 16 percent of voters nationwide submitted their ballots via drop-off boxes. Despite the prevalence of voting by mail and the use of drop-off locations, officials at the state and federal levels have consistently found no evidence of widespread fraud.

Joining Raoul in filing the brief are the attorneys general of California, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and Washington.