National Survey Finds that Majority of U.S. Business Executives Support Vote-By-Mail Option

Washington, D.C. -- A nationally fielded survey of senior business executives found strong support (62%) for providing citizens a vote-by-mail option.

As the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to disrupt the November general election, election officials and policymakers are considering vital adaptation measures such as early voting and mail-in voting to protect voter safety. The survey, which was fielded in December 2019 on the eve of the pandemic, suggests a strong constituency of support for these efforts.

The survey gathered data from over 1,000 MBAs and senior business executives, asking representative and bipartisan samples their views on democracy and various political reform ideas. It found that 9 in 10 business executives are concerned with the state of U.S. democracy. When queried about “voting at home” measures, whereby voters would “receive ballots in the mail and then choose whether they want to mail it in, drop it off, or cast in-person,” support reached nearly two-thirds (62%), reflecting a significant majority.

“Business leaders were coming down on the side of expanded voter choice even before the pandemic,” says Daniella Ballou-Aares, CEO of the Leadership Now Project, which commissioned the study. “Now, in light of a national emergency that threatens Americans’ ability to vote in the 2020 election, the case is even stronger for ensuring voters have a safe and secure way to access the ballot.”

Leadership Now has joined a national coalition of groups called Fix the System to advocate for essential adaptation measures in preparation for the November election, including early and mail-in voting options; polling sites modified for health safety; expanded online registration; and voter education. While Congress recently provided $400 million to support state election systems as part of its $2 trillion stimulus bill, experts warn that at least $2 billion is required to adequately prepare.
“Business leaders have a strong interest in advocating for these vital measures to protect our elections,” says Nilmini Rubin, head of Fix the System. “The stability of the business environment depends on the stability of the political system. Election security is a business issue.”

Additional analysis by Leadership Now concludes that expanded voting measures are well-proven and well-liked by voters. Five states already do exclusive vote-by-mail, while an additional 30 offer significant absentee, mail-in voting, and early voting options, with high levels of voter satisfaction. All but 10 states offer online registration. However, strengthening existing election systems to handle a likely surge in at-home voting requests while expanding these options to all Americans will require more urgent support from Congress and state legislatures.

"This data reinforces a trend we've been seeing for a long time: voters want safe and secure options to vote from home or in person" said Amber McReynolds, CEO of the National Vote at Home Institute, a Leadership Now portfolio organization. "We've seen huge success with this form of voting from states that have introduced it over the years and they've proven that mail-in voting can be a secure option for all Americans to make their voices heard in elections."

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**About the Leadership Now Project**

The Leadership Now Project is a membership organization of business and thought leaders who are committed to long-term solutions to renew American democracy. Leadership Now has four guiding principles that transcend political parties: to protect democracy while renewing it; to promote fact and evidence-based policymaking; to create an economy that works for all, and to embrace diversity as an asset. In 2019-2021, the organization is focused on the threats to the fundamentals of democracy, including low voter participation, gerrymandering, and the influence of money in politics.

Incubated in 2017 by a group of Harvard Business School alumni, Leadership Now activates the resources, networks, and skills of our members. We power reforms to our system through sophisticated analytics; engage in thought leadership; mobilize new investments in a portfolio of reform organizations like OpenSecrets and recognize political leaders who change the game and share our principles. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Leadership Now is also encouraging the business community to stand up for the continuity of the 2020 Election.

Today, Leadership Now has members in six cities and continues to grow. Learn more at [www.leadershipnowproject.org](http://www.leadershipnowproject.org) and sign up there for our Stay Awake Newsletter. You can also follow us on LinkedIn and on Twitter at @LeadershipNP.