<u>Position of the Fairfax County Electoral Board on Moving June Primary to Third Tuesday</u>

For Fairfax County elections, 165 of the 243 precincts are located in schools. School buildings are particularly suited to meet the Federal, State, and local requirements for precincts that include preference for public buildings, location, ADA accessibility, sufficient parking, and the required technology to support voting equipment. Without the use of schools, Fairfax County could not hold elections.

Recent events across the country have heightened security concerns in the schools when students are present.   As a result of the June 12 primary, election officials from 20 school-located precincts reported security concerns. In the past that number has been only 2 or 3 elementary schools. Administrators wanted to keep the doors to the building locked and require someone to be present to let voters in or have a security guard at the door. Some suggested posting uniformed officers. This is not advisable because of the possibility of voter suppression. Locked doors cannot be accommodated; it impedes free access to the polling location and is prohibited by law. Parents, voters, and school personnel expressed security concerns about having students and voters share the same space, often the same room.

Over 60 school-located precincts reported that end-of-school activities contributed to a lack of voter parking, precincts located in trailers or in the lobby, or too-small rooms. Bus drop-off and delivery also impeded voter access in at least 10 schools.

Because schools are closed in Fairfax County on Election Day in November, it is the June primary where the competing priorities of secure access for students versus unimpeded access for voters is the problem. Moving the primary date to the third Tuesday in June would alleviate most of the problems.

Previous objections to the third Tuesday have included the possibility of depressing voter turnout because school is out and vacations are underway. Nevertheless, student safety should be a higher priority, and absentee voting is a viable alternative.

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