

**RESOLUTION NUMBER 8**  
**ABSENTEE VOTING DURING COVID-19**

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 pandemic is prevalent in the City of St. Louis, causing more than 1300 residents to become infected and costing over seventy lives; and

**WHEREAS**, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) found that certain groups of people, including people 60 years of age and older, are more at risk for COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, in the City of St. Louis COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted our African American community, with roughly 68% of people who have tested positive being African American, and African Americans make up nearly 46% of our population as the 2010 census; and

**WHEREAS**, to slow the spread of COVID-19 the Mayor of City of St. Louis issued Mayoral Proclamation of Civil Emergency on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020 stating that “pursuant to Article XIII, Section 14-C(c) of the Charter of the City of St. Louis I find that COVID-19, a malignant, infectious, and contagious disease, is threatened in the City of St. Louis, and accordingly I hereby so proclaim. Accordingly, the Director of Health and Hospitals/Health Commissioner may take necessary steps, use such measures, and incur such expenses as he deems necessary to avoid, suppress, and mitigate that disease until I proclaim the need therefore ended, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the charter or any ordinance;” and

**WHEREAS**, St. Louis County issued a similar emergency order pertaining to COVID-19 and St. Louis City and St. Louis County have continued to work together throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to streamline processes and decisions across governmental jurisdictions; and

**WHEREAS**, the St. Louis County Board of Elections mailed out absentee ballot applications, with return envelopes, for the June, August, and November 2020 elections to all registered voters 60 years of age and older residing in St. Louis County in order to ensure voting access for at-risk populations; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of St. Louis also has elections occurring in June, August, and November of 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, even during national crisis, such as pandemics, maintaining safe access to voting is essential to maintaining democracy; and

**WHEREAS**, Missouri State law specifically states “confinement due to illness” as a qualifier for voting via an absentee ballot, which could be applied to those who are self-isolating, self-quarantining, or social distancing because of COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to making accommodations to vote for at risk-populations, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has recommended that election officials encourage mail-in voting, early voting, and drive through voting to help people minimize direct contact and reduce crowd size at polling stations; and

**WHEREAS**, the current procedure of temperature screening as a condition of admission would effectively disenfranchise symptomatic voters, not doing temperature checks would risk the infection of other voters and poll workers; and

**WHEREAS**, In the absence of widespread testing for COVID-19, even asymptomatic people have been known to carry in the virus; and

**WHEREAS**, after Wisconsin went forward with in-person voting in March, at least 52 people are known to have contracted the virus as a result of working the polls or voting; and

**WHEREAS**, while it is likely that the current Stay-At-Home order issued under Health Commissioner's Order #7 will be relaxed during the upcoming election cycle, it is also likely that large crowds, such as those that gather at polling locations will continue to be prohibited in subsequent Health Orders; and

**WHEREAS**, it is certain that there will be close personal contact between voters and election officials and between officials themselves in violation of CDC guidelines.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Aldermen of the City of St Louis request that, at a minimum, the St. Louis Board of Election Commissioner's follow the lead of St. Louis County and mail absentee ballot applications and return envelopes for the June, August, and November 2020 elections to all registered voters 60 years of age and older in the City of St. Louis.

**LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED** that the St. Louis Board of Election Commissioners expand upon the efforts of St. Louis County and mail absentee ballot applications and return envelopes for the June, August, and November 2020 elections to all registered in the City of St. Louis.

**Introduced this 8<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020 by:**

**The Honorable Megan E. Green, Alderwoman 15<sup>th</sup> Ward**

**The Honorable Pamela Boyd, Alderwoman 27<sup>th</sup> Ward**

**The Honorable Annie Rice, Alderwoman 8<sup>th</sup> Ward**

**The Honorable Sarah Wood Martin, Alderwoman 11<sup>th</sup> Ward**

**The Honorable Christine Ingrassia, Alderwoman 6<sup>th</sup> Ward**

**The Honorable Cara Spencer, Alderwoman 20<sup>th</sup> Ward**

**The Honorable Heather Navarro, Alderwoman 28<sup>th</sup> Ward**

**The Honorable Dan Guenther, Alderman 9<sup>th</sup> Ward**

**The Honorable John Collins-Muhammad, Alderman 21<sup>st</sup> Ward**

**The Honorable Jeffrey Boyd, Alderman 22<sup>nd</sup> Ward**

**The Honorable Beth Murphy, Alderwoman 13<sup>th</sup> Ward**

**The Honorable Bret Narayan, Alderman 24<sup>th</sup> Ward**

**Adopted this 8<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020 as attested by:**

---

**Terry Kennedy**  
**Clerk, Board of Aldermen**

---

**Lewis E. Reed**  
**President, Board of Aldermen**