Resolution 2020-01

Regarding Improvements to the Accessible Absentee Ballot Marking System in New Mexico

WHEREAS, since the signing into law in 2017 of HB98, a bill championed by the National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico, registered voters in New Mexico who are blind or visually impaired have been able to use the access technology with which they are familiar to privately and independently mark the printed absentee ballot using a computer, smartphone, or tablet; an Internet connection; and a printer; and

WHEREAS, under the current system, voters who are blind or visually impaired must request the electronic absentee ballot ahead of time and then wait for days or even weeks to receive an email with a link to their ballot; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico voters who requested an accessible absentee ballot and who did not receive the ballot in a timely manner have sometimes had to contact their local county clerk before receiving their ballot; and

WHEREAS, the ubiquitous nature of the Internet, combined with a wide variety of electronic content delivery systems, have reduced the use of printers in our society—so much so that printers are often not found in today's homes; and

WHEREAS, unless they own or have convenient access to a printer, voters who are blind or visually impaired are unable to take advantage of New Mexico's electronic accessible ballot marking system; and

WHEREAS, in other states, technology exists and is being used today in actual elections to enable registered voters to receive their electronic ballots immediately upon request and to deliver their ballots without having to print them; an

WHEREAS, voters who serve in the military or citizens who live overseas (so-called UOCAVA voters) already have the opportunity to submit their voted ballots using fax, email, or a secure web portal; and

WHEREAS, as much as New Mexico's accessible ballot marking system represents a significant improvement for blind or visually impaired voters who want to mark the printed absentee ballot in complete privacy, it possesses two significant deficiencies:

\* Blind or visually impaired voters who do not have a printer or convenient access to a printer cannot use the accessible ballot marking system and

\* Blind or visually impaired voters who submit online requests for their accessible ballots must wait for an email which might or might not be sent before they can vote:

Now, therefore, BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico

assembled in virtual convention this 29th day of August, 2020, that this organization call upon

the Governor, the New Mexico State Legislature, the Secretary of State, and the New Mexico

Commission for the Blind to work with the National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico and

other interested parties to

1. Design or procure a system whereby voters who are blind or visually impaired can request an accessible ballot to be made available to them electronically as soon as early voting starts and have that ballot displayed on their screens immediately after they are verified; and

2. Design or procure a secure system through which voted ballots can be submitted electronically, thus eliminating the need for voters who are blind or visually impaired to own or find a printer before they can independently and privately mark their printed absentee ballots.