

# News Release

## **Woodward forms Oakland County Safe, Healthy and Secure Elections Advisory Council**

*Election experts to provide recommendations to county Board for 2020 elections*

**June 10, 2020, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI.** – Today, Oakland County Board of Commissioners Chairman **David T. Woodward** (D-Royal Oak) announced the formation of the Oakland County Safe, Healthy and Secure Elections Advisory Council. This study group will make recommendations to the Board on ways to protect voters and election workers while assisting local communities as they prepare to hold elections during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This is an unprecedented time for holding elections in Oakland County,” Woodward said. “We must do whatever we can to make sure voters and election workers are safe, have the resources and equipment in place, and be prepared as we can to make sure we have safe, healthy and secure elections in 2020.”

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is recommending that remaining elections be vote-by-mail as much as possible to reduce the number of people gathering at polling locations. Additionally, a recent voter-approved change in state law makes every voter eligible to vote by mail, and local clerks are anticipating that more people will vote by mail than anytime in state history.

Woodward has asked Commissioner **Nancy Quarles** (D-Southfield) to chair the advisory council, which is made up election professionals and democracy advocates. This study group is being asked to:

- a) identify challenges and barriers for having safe, healthy and secure elections in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- b) recommend the county support legislation to address these; and
- c) propose solutions and budget recommendations for Oakland County to help our local communities

“We want to make sure all votes get counted, and elections can be held fairly and safely in 2020,” Quarles, who is not running for re-election, said. “I have confidence this advisory council will bring forth great ideas the Board can consider very quickly.”

The nine-member task force includes:

- Nancy Quarles, County Commissioner, chair
- Joe Rozell, Oakland County Director of Elections, vice chair
- Marne McGrath, Ferndale City Clerk
- Melanie Halas, Royal Oak City Clerk
- Yvette Talley, Lathrup Village City Clerk
- Debbie Miller, Rose Township Clerk
- Geri Rinschler, League of Women Voters
- Robert Winn, Disability Network Oakland and Macomb
- Merissa Kovach, ACLU of Michigan

Woodward is requesting the first recommendations be submitted by the end of June, so there is time for the Board to take action and make resources available for the August primary and November general election.

For more information about the Board of Commissioners, please visit [www.oakgov.com/boc](http://www.oakgov.com/boc) or call 248-858-0100.

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