April 17, 2020

Dear NY Congressional Representative,

As you continue to respond to the health and safety challenges presented by COVID-19 we write to urge you to amend the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to remove the mandated 20% state match for 2020 election support funding.

The $400 million in new Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funds will enable election officials to prepare for enhanced voting procedures during the coronavirus outbreak, but by mandating a 20% state match, Congress limits the ability of states to accept these funds. States must be free to allocate this funding to their elections without requirements to match any or all of the funding provided by the federal government. States are already experiencing extra costs to contain the pandemic and severe damage to their economies.

States are in dire need of additional funds to purchase cleaning supplies, protective masks for staff and poll workers, resources to meet the increased demand for absentee ballots, and temporary staff to process the increased absentee ballot demand. Without these necessary materials and staff, voters may be unable to safely exercise their most basic democratic right.

Now more than ever, our Boards of Elections need monetary support to fulfill their mission and ensure that everyone has the right to participate in our elections fairly and safely. The $20 million in CARES Act funding dedicated to New York State will ensure the health and safety of New York voters and election administrators. We once again urge you to amend the CARES Act to eliminate the need for state matching funds.

Sincerely,

Laura Ladd Bierman
Executive Director
League of Women Voters of New York State