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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **City of Columbus, County of Santa Clara and Public Rights Project Lead Nationwide Coalition Opposing the Trump Administration's Assault on the U.S. Postal Service**

**COLUMBUS** — Today, Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced that the City of Columbus, the County of Santa Clara and Public Rights Project filed an amicus curiae brief on behalf of a nationwide coalition of local and tribal governments opposing recent U.S. Postal Service (USPS) changes that have slowed critically important mail delivery. The brief, filed by 32 local and tribal governments, urges courts in Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania to block the USPS changes, which impede the ability of localities to administer the November election and provide other core governmental services in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Starting in July 2020, U.S. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy implemented a number of changes at USPS that have slowed down mail delivery and will make it harder for vulnerable communities, such as the elderly and communities of color, to vote by mail and receive essential government services. The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted these same communities, and due to the changes, now face even greater hurdles in exercising their right to vote and receiving often life-saving services such as mail-delivered prescriptions.

**“The changes deployed to the USPS by the Trump Administration are decaying citizens’ right to vote – a constitutional right that we must protect,”** said Klein. **“Being able to safely and securely vote by mail is permitted in Ohio and is critical more than ever during this global pandemic. Leading this coalition is one more way that the City of Columbus is standing up for everyone’s voice to be heard.”**

The amicus brief highlights how the USPS changes and resulting mail delays directly interfere with local and tribal government plans to administer the November election, including by delaying the delivery and receipt of ballots—posing a particular risk that ballots cast by members of the military overseas as well as elderly and disabled voters mailing their ballots will not be received in time to be counted. As a result, many local and tribal governments now must revamp election plans and find the funds—a mere two months before the election—to increase voting hours, secure additional polling locations, and/or add ballot drop boxes (*\*see Editor’s Note*) to ensure their constituents can safely and reliably exercise their right to vote.

The brief also details the ways that many local governments rely on the mail to provide their residents essential social services, such as mailing prescriptions and providing rental assistance. Delays in receiving these services are particularly high stakes for vulnerable communities, given the health and economic crisis across the nation.

**“As the brief makes clear, the USPS provides the backbone to so many crucial government services delivered by local and tribal governments,” said Public Rights Project’s Legal Director Jonathan Miller. “This isn’t just about the upcoming election. The USPS’s changes undercut the ability of those on the front lines of government committed to serving their communities. They delay needed medications, delivery of test results, and crucial notices. These politically motivated and totally unnecessary changes harm people’s lives.”**

A diverse coalition of local and tribal jurisdictions joined the City of Columbus, the County of Santa Clara and Public Rights Project in filing the amicus brief. Signatories include: Philadelphia, PA; Cook County, IL; Alameda City, CA; Cincinnati, OH; Atlanta, GA; Dayton, OH; Austin, TX; East Palo Alto, CA; Berkeley, CA; Flint, MI; Boston, MA; Gary, IN; Cambridge, MA; Houston, TX; Chicago, IL; Harris County, TX; Los Angeles County, CA; Pittsburgh, PA; Los Angeles City, CA; Portland, OR; Madison, WI; Saint Paul, MN; Marin County, CA; Santa Cruz, CA; Monterey County, CA; Seattle, WA; Oakland, CA; Somerville, MA; West Hollywood, CA; Yurok Tribe, CA.

The brief, attached, was filed in support of motions for preliminary injunctions filed in Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, et al. v. DeJoy et al., No. 2-20-cv-04096 (E.D. Pa.) and State of New York, et al. v. Trump, et al., No. 1-20-cv-02340 (D.D.C.).

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**Editor’s Note:** On Sept. 3, 2020, Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein’s office joined by the City of Cincinnati, the City of Dayton, the City of Akron, Summit County and Montgomery County Commissioners Judy Dodge, Deborah Lieberman, and Carolyn Rice, filed an [amicus brief](#) to request a preliminary injunction against Secretary of State Frank LaRose’s directive that prohibits county boards of elections from having more than one drop box location per county for the General Election on Nov. 3, 2020. Directive 2020-16 was issued by Secretary LaRose on Aug. 12, 2020, despite nothing in the Ohio Revised Code prohibiting the use of multiple boxes.

### **About the Public Rights Project**

Public Rights Project is a national non-profit, based in Oakland, that builds state and local governments’ capacity to enforce their residents’ rights. Their mission is to close the gap between the promise of our laws and the lived reality of our most vulnerable communities. They work to achieve this mission by training attorney fellows to catalyze the proactive work of government law offices; providing strategic support in legal strategy, research, partnerships and data analytics to help offices develop high-impact legal cases; and designing and spreading community outreach and organizing approaches that empower community residents and advocates to be active partners in an enforcement agenda rooted in equity.