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MEMORANDUM

TO: Osage Voters
FROM: Wahzhazhe Elections Board & Staff
DATE: March 31, 2020
RE: 2020 General Election

In response to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Wahzhazhe Election Board and Staff explored postponing the June election. In consulting with the Attorney General, Clint Patterson, we discovered it is NOT possible. Principal Chief, Geoffrey Standing Bear, (also an attorney) agreed. Article XIII, Section 4 of the Constitution of the Osage Nation says, “General Elections **shall be held** on the first Monday in June commencing in 2006 and next in 2010 and every even numbered year thereafter”. The only way to override a Constitutional mandate is with a Constitutional amendment, which requires a vote of the citizens.

With no recourse available, the vote must go on. Please know the Wahzhazhe Election Board and Staff will be taking special precautions in the upcoming election on Monday, June 1, 2020. After consulting with Dr. Ron Shaw, Wahzhazhe Health Center Chief Medical Officer, we are implementing at a minimum the following for the polling place:

- Large polling place to allow for appropriate social distancing
- Masks and gloves for staff and voters
- Voters will remain in their vehicle until directed to enter polling place
- Voting booths will be for a single voter rather than a voter on each side
- Any necessary lines will be formed outside with social distancing enforced
- Hand sanitizer will be available for staff and voters

At this time, we are urging all voters that are high risk or have concerns about the COVID 19 virus to request an Absentee Ballot. We mailed a request form to voters that should have been received March 26, 2020 +/- a couple of days. Please fill it out and return it by mail at P.O. Box 928, Pawhuska, OK 74056, fax at 918-287-5292, or email at

electionoffice@osagenation-nsn.gov along with a legible copy of your photo ID. Please do this immediately in order to have adequate time to be processed. On the form you can request to be a Permanent Absentee Voter which insures you will get an Absentee Ballot for every election in the future without having to fill out another Request. This can be cancelled at any time. Lots of voters have already done this, if you're not sure you're a Permanent Absentee Voter you may call the office to confirm. PLEASE be sure to use your current mailing address.

Please know the safety of our voters and workers are our first concern and we are taking all precautions at our disposal. We are also charged by law to maximize voter participation. With that, we appreciate your cooperation and consideration during these unprecedented times. Our will as a people has been tested over time and our history says we will overcome.