

Opinion: It's time to get out and vote

By Mike Pongon, contributing writer and CEO of Point B



This time in history gives business leaders a unique opportunity to give employees a unique gift: the gift of time so they can vote.

It's not often that offering your people a bit of time during a single workday can provide such an opportunity to make a difference. Voter turnout in the U.S., already one of the lowest in the world, is facing significant challenges in the upcoming 2020 elections.

Employees often don't take the time to vote due to work and life demands – no one should have to choose between casting a vote and safeguarding their livelihood.

The pandemic, which is already wreaking havoc in the world, may mean fewer people are willing and able to work the polls, resulting in longer wait times, the possibility of fewer polling stations and greater difficulties to cast in-person votes. The global movement for racial equality is bringing to the forefront how communities of color are disproportionately affected by voter suppression.

People need time to vote. The need for support from the business community has never been greater.

Our company has joined the “Time to Vote” movement, a business-led coalition of more than 700 companies that aims to increase voter participation in the U.S. elections. Companies involved in “Time to Vote” support the right to vote in a variety of ways, depending on the organization, including giving employees access to information about early voting or vote-by-mail options, offering paid time off on election day or making it a day without meetings.

We’ve canceled all company meetings on Nov. 3, invited our clients to join us in clearing calendars, provided “I voted” video conference backgrounds, and are encouraging all our people to find the tools and time they need to vote in the general election.

We must do better than making our people choose between work and voting. As leaders, we need to be advocates for voter access and participation.

I encourage all my fellow business leaders to make a commitment. Give your people the tools and time they need to make their voices heard. Listen to challenges they may be having and then do everything you can to make voting as easy and convenient as possible.

Let’s do the very best we can to help our people make a difference.