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CONTACT: Samantha Fisher
615.741.5860
samantha.fisher@ag.tn.gov

**STATEMENT FROM AG SLATERY FOLLOWING ABSENTEE VOTING
DECISION**

Nashville- This evening Davidson County Chancellor Ellen Hobbs Lyle ordered state government to abandon long standing requirements for in person voting.

Tennessee, like all states, must engage in a delicate balancing act: it must safeguard voters from COVID-19 exposure while ensuring that voters are not disenfranchised.

Tennessee’s election officials consulted with experts from the Tennessee Department of Health and county health departments to create a comprehensive COVID-19 election plan that conforms to the CDC’s guidance and makes Tennessee’s polling places safer than the general community.

The Court’s ruling, while rightly taking into account the safety of Tennessee’s voters and poll workers, failed to appropriately consider the extensive safety measures of the COVID-19 election plan, and, more importantly, gave little weight to the unanimous expertise of state and county election officials that hastily expanding absentee voting is impracticable and risks disenfranchising Tennessee voters. The Court’s order has taken this important decision away from Tennessee’s state and county election experts and unnecessarily risks voter confusion, potential voter fraud, and election disruption.

“It is yet another court decision replacing legislation passed by the people’s elected officials with its own judgment, largely ignoring the practicalities of implementing such a decision, and doing so in the midst of a pandemic and budget crisis,” said Herbert H. Slatery III.