

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **RESOLVE, VoteSafe, and Mission for Masks partner to launch *Gear Up to VoteSafe***

*A non-partisan initiative to support safe voting by putting PPE in the hands of election officials, poll workers, volunteers, and voters*

October 1, 2020 – [RESOLVE](#), [VoteSafe](#), and [Mission for Masks](#) announce an initiative to support safe, in-person voting by getting personal protective equipment (PPE) to election officials, poll workers, volunteers, and voters for the upcoming U.S. national election, taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nearly 1 million people in the U.S. serve as election officials and poll workers. Despite the upcoming election occurring during an historic pandemic, many polling stations, including Election Super Centers, lack PPE. This means voters and poll workers will take on additional risk – especially those who are older or who have underlying health conditions. *Gear Up to VoteSafe* fills this gap by providing PPE kits and voter safety guides. *Gear Up to VoteSafe* PPE kits will be provided on a low-cost or donated basis, with prioritized distribution to election officials, poll workers, and volunteers at Election Super Centers and other polling stations.

The typical *Gear Up to VoteSafe* PPE kit will include a [Makers Respond](#) face shield, N95 or equivalent face mask, hand sanitizer, and a pocket-sized voter safety guide.<sup>1</sup> This PPE is essential for workers and volunteers who will interact with voters for many hours. A *Gear Up to VoteSafe* downloadable voter safety guide, created by RESOLVE project [Open Source Medical Supplies](#), will also be [available online](#) for election workers and voters alike.

RESOLVE, VoteSafe, and Mission for Masks are currently working with election officials, polling sites, and other organizations like the [National Vote at Home Institute](#) to provide *Gear Up to VoteSafe* PPE kits to [Election Super Centers](#) across the country. The kits can be distributed to election officials, poll workers, and volunteers via pre-election mailing packages and on Election Day at or near polling stations. RESOLVE, VoteSafe, and Mission for Masks will work with all political parties, businesses, civil society organizations, and faith groups of all kinds on this public health initiative.

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<sup>1</sup> Kit content may be adjusted based on availability of supplies.

Communications and social media efforts are also underway to share information about how to vote safely.

“Throughout the primaries this year, voters have demonstrated their desire to have options for casting their ballot. Voters want to choose between secure absentee ballots and safe in-person polling places, and they deserve those options. We’re proud to be working with RESOLVE to help our election officials and poll workers, the guardians of our democracy, build safer, in-person polling places for their voters amidst this pandemic,” said Governor Tom Ridge, Co-Chair of the VoteSafe coalition.

“*Gear Up to Vote Safe* is a non-partisan effort to support election workers and volunteers and a pledge and positive action each voter can take. We’re issuing a call to businesses, foundations, civic and religious organizations, political parties, and others to join this effort to ensure a safe, in-person vote,” said Stephen D’Esposito, President and CEO of RESOLVE.

“With the COVID-19 pandemic still impacting the lives of all Americans, it is imperative at Mission for Masks that we build coalitions like this one, and stay nimble and reactive to the needs of workers and volunteers who are the bedrock of our democratic voting process. That a small organization like ours can help provide protection, safety, and comfort for election and poll workers around the country goes to show that this is a moment where everyday citizens can make a difference,” said Jess Jacobs, co-founder of Mission for Masks.

“It’s our civic duty to vote and to vote safely, whether we do it by mail or in-person. This year voters need to do more than leave the polls with an ‘I Voted’ sticker – they need to vote, and vote safe,” said Abby Dilley, Vice President of RESOLVE.

“Poll workers and voters alike deserve to know how to set up safe, in-person voting. We’re committed to providing the guidance polling stations need to create a safe environment for the public. As part of *Gear Up to VoteSafe*, Open Source Medical Supplies will be publishing guidance on safer in-person voting, including guidance for polling stations on how to set up a safer polling space, safe conduct and proper PPE usage instructions for poll workers and poll watchers, and general instructions for the public on how to vote safely during this pandemic,” said Gui Cavalcanti, Co-Executive Director of Open Source Medical Supplies.

RESOLVE, VoteSafe, and Mission for Masks have launched a [fundraising drive](#) to support the *Gear Up to VoteSafe* initiative, especially for communities who lack the resources to secure PPE on their own. Interested parties can help by sponsoring *Gear Up to VoteSafe* PPE kits for distribution to Election Super Centers, purchasing and donating kits for polling stations or volunteers, buying face shields to supplement voters’ own PPE, and sharing information about *Gear Up to VoteSafe*. For more information on how to help, visit the *Gear Up to VoteSafe* [website](#).

**RESOLVE** is a Washington D.C. based non-governmental organization with more than 40 years of experience forging sustainable solutions to critical social, health, and environmental challenges by creating innovative partnerships where they are least likely and most needed. RESOLVE is known for designing innovative projects that create common ground, including recent COVID-19 response initiatives like [Makers Respond](#), which has put PPE in the hands of first responders, and [Open Source Medical Supplies](#), which has helped makers and manufacturers respond to shortages by providing rapid, expert review of open-source PPE designs. This new partnership builds on RESOLVE’s history of supporting rapid response to issues like conflict minerals, food safety, the economic impact of the Ebola outbreak, and the wildlife poaching crisis, and an ability to transition immediate support into effective, scalable, long-term solutions. For more information on RESOLVE’s COVID-19 response initiative, please visit [this site](#).

**VoteSafe** is a non-partisan coalition of election administrators and organizations co-chaired by former Governors Tom Ridge (PA) and Jennifer Granholm (MI). VoteSafe endorses the simple principle that

every American has the right to vote safely, even amidst the pandemic. VoteSafe is committed to ensuring voters have options: expanded access to absentee ballots as well as safe, sanitary, and accessible in-person voting locations. For more information on VoteSafe, please visit [this site](#).

**Mission for Masks**, an initiative to connect medical workers, essential workers and non-profit organizations to PPE during the COVID-19 pandemic, was co-founded by actress, producer, and advocate Jess Jacobs and critical care nurse and author Sonja M. Schwartzbach. Mission for Masks has a roster of over 300 groups around the USA and is helping to facilitate the movement of equipment from manufacturers and importers directly to those in need, through hospital purchases, city and state partnerships, mutual aid groups, non-profits, and philanthropic donors. For more information on Mission for Masks, please visit [this site](#).

**Open Source Medical Supplies**, a project of RESOLVE, informs and connects local makers, manufacturers, organizers, institutions, and the public so local communities can produce their own supplies and use them to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises. OSMS will provide VoteSafe guides to support volunteers and voters. For more information about OSMS, please visit [this site](#).