

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 22, 2021

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

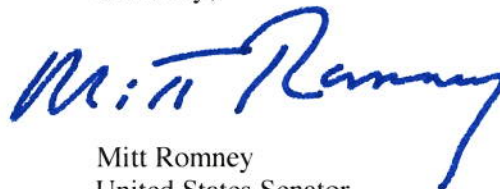
Every year, thousands of Utahns rely upon the services of the State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) to apply for or renew their passports. As you work to bring consular services back to pre-COVID levels, I urge you to consider how to better address the needs of Americans who currently face hardships in accessing passport processing. Today, residents throughout the Western Mountain region of the United States, including Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming must renew their passports by mail, or travel significant distances to neighboring states to access the nearest passport offices. Consequently, same day, in-person service is essentially impossible for millions of Americans in these states.

Utah is rapidly expanding as a center for global commerce and tourism, is home to thousands of Latter-day Saints who annually embark on worldwide religious missions, and, like much of the Western Mountain region, has a rapidly growing population. These factors create a consistently high demand for passport services. Last year, the CA issued more than 120,000 passports to Utahns, and 674,433 passports have been issued over just the past four years. Across the aforementioned Western states, over 3,528,000 passports were issued to residents since 2017.

In response to a question for the record I submitted as part of your confirmation process, you stated that you would “*support directing the Bureau of Consular Affairs to take appropriate steps to ensure that passport services are accessible to all eligible Americans, including those living outside of large population centers*” and “*direct the Bureau of Consular Affairs to review appropriate steps to ensure that passport services are accessible to all eligible Americans, including in states with high demand for passport services*”.

Now that you are confirmed, I am writing to request that you prioritize this review and provide an update on its status to my office. Together, I hope that we can work to improve the Department’s passport services in these locations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mitt Romney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mitt" and last name "Romney" clearly legible.

Mitt Romney
United States Senator