



JoAnn Windholz <joannwindholz@gmail.com>

Please vote YES on Watcher Rights Bill HB-15-1193

1 message

Anil Mathai <anil.mathai@aol.com>

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Cc: joannwindholz@gmail.com

Dear Chairman Ryden and Committee Members:

I apologize I am unable to attend in person today due to work related commitments but I am writing to personally support Representative Joann Windholz's Watcher Rights Bill HB-15-1193.

Current and longstanding law supports the rights of citizens, candidates and parties to verifiability of elections through the independent role of observers. As we have learned in Adams County over the years, those rights have been diluted through election officials' restrictive interpretations and unilateral adoption of non-transparent policies. This bill clarifying the crucial role of watchers and their access to all information as granted by our current statutes is necessary to avoid prohibitively expensive litigation to settle the controversies in favor of transparency. The bill clarifies that the rights of access granted to watchers for over 100 years in the polling places and ballot counting are just as robust and necessary in mail ballot elections with modernized ballot issuance and tabulation. Centralization of ballot processing should not dilute the rights of oversight. If anything, given the enhanced risk of potential voter fraud that mail ballot elections creates, even more robust oversight should perhaps be enacted.

While our party (the Adams County Republicans) appoints election judges for bi-partisan teams, a complement of watchers is still very much needed. Judges are human and make errors. Judges are sometimes influenced in close decisions by stronger personalities, and need the help of a watcher to challenge such decisions. The work is tedious, detail-oriented and so important that it merits full oversight of the judges' work to avoid errors and unnecessary controversies. Current practices of severely restricting watcher access under excuses of "efficiency" and "space constraints," undermines the integrity of the election and the rights of all parties to challenge errors and verify the results of all decisions.

Adams County voters have experienced the need for more independent verification by watchers in areas of voter registration, signature verification, oversight of tabulation, oversight of ballot security, and the ability to challenge questionable decisions by judges. Without meaningful checks and balances that adequate watchers' access provides, the elections are not fully transparent. Voters and candidates soon lose confidence in the process. Voter integrity in our elections is not a partisan issue, it is an integral issue of transparency and honesty that affects ALL Americans regardless of race, gender, economic class, geographical location, political party affiliation, etc. All Americans expect full honesty in their (directed) elections. Therefore, please vote YES to support full transparent and verifiable elections, please vote YES on Watcher Rights Bill HB-15-1193. Thank you for reading my request and I want to thank you and the entire committee for your service to the voters of Colorado!

Sincerely,

Anil Mathai

Chairman, Adams County Republican Party