

February 28, 2017

Hon. Ken Rizer, Chair

Hon. Mary Mascher, Ranking Member

State Government Committee

Iowa House of Representatives

1007 East Grand Avenue

Des Moines, IA 50319

Dear Chair Rizer and Ranking Member Mascher:

As Vote Everywhere Ambassadors with the Andrew Goodman Foundation at Simpson College, we would like to express our concerns about the “election integrity” legislation proposed by Secretary of State Paul Pate (House Study Bill 93 and Senate File 47). All three of us come from different ideological backgrounds and other states, yet we all chose to attend college in Iowa for the tremendous opportunities to become active in politics and public policy that other states cannot match. We have joined together in a strictly nonpartisan manner to explain how this proposed legislation will impact the ability of college students in Iowa -- particularly out-of-state students -- to register and vote in Iowa elections.

In determining the effectiveness of this legislation we must ask ourselves: do the benefits of “election integrity” outweigh the costs of preventing out-of-state college students from voting? We are concerned that this legislation, as proposed, will erect significant barriers to out-of-state college students’ eligibility to vote in Iowa.

This past election cycle, we worked directly with local party officials, county auditors, and Secretary Pate himself to encourage voter engagement among college students of all ideologies and party affiliations. In Iowa, approximately 32,200 students attending four-year public universities are from out-of-state, making up nearly 39% of overall enrollment. Moreover, approximately 25,000 students attending Iowa's private, nonprofit colleges and universities are from out-of-state, accounting for 51% of total enrollment.

We are concerned that out-of-state college students will be not be able to prove their Iowa residency for the purpose of registering to vote. Currently, many students use a lease agreement to prove their Iowa residency to register to vote. This lease agreement is a formal document between the college/university and the student, which the county auditor accepts as proof that a student is a valid Iowa resident for voter registration purposes. Senate File 47 would change this process and make lease agreements no longer valid proof of residency. In other words, out-of-state students living in campus housing would not be able to prove their residency, and therefore would not be able to register to vote in Iowa.

Moreover, even if a new out-of-state college student is able to prove their residency and register to vote, many would be unable to prove their identity to vote at the polls. This legislation would require these students to obtain an Iowa driver's license, Iowa non-operator ID, military ID, U.S. passport, or newly issued voter ID - just so they can vote at the polls. Many out-of-state students do not have the money to pay for another driver's license, do not have a car, do not have a non-operator ID, are not in the military, or do not carry a U.S. passport. Although no out-of-state college student in the state of Iowa has ever been charged with voter fraud, these students will face more difficulties in voting if this legislation is passed.

According to the Des Moines Register, The Iowa State Association of County Auditors (ISACA), the group responsible for implementing this legislation if passed, is on record opposing the legislation due in part to the voter ID requirements. Clearly, Secretary Pate's Voter ID Plan, which is opposed by the ISACA, will not bring about "election integrity" and does not justify the voter suppression of out-of-state college students.

Overall, this legislation will either discourage out-of-state college students from voting, or disenfranchise out-of-state college students from voting. Regardless, this legislation says to out-of-state students: although you will live in Iowa, contribute to the Iowa economy, and be a part of the Iowa educational system for *at least* the next four years, you cannot vote, or at least you will have to obtain additional documentation in order to vote in the state of Iowa.

Thank you for taking our concerns into account as the State Government Committee of the Iowa House of Representatives considers HSB 93.

Sincerely,

Olivia Anderson, Danielle Bates, and Tegan Jarchow

Andrew Goodman Foundation Vote Everywhere Ambassadors, Simpson College