



DUBUQUE COUNTY AUDITOR

Commissioner of Elections
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To: Iowa House Legislators

From: Kevin Dragotto

Re: HF 590

Good evening,

My name is Kevin Dragotto, and I am the Dubuque County Auditor. I am writing in opposition to HF 590 as it is currently proposed. As Auditor and Commissioner of Elections, I was elected by the citizens of our County to administer our elections. The safety, security and accessibility of our elections is of the utmost importance to me.

This proposed legislation does not strengthen anything, in fact it further restricts the ability of elected officials to administer elections for their citizens. HF 590 does this in a few ways:

- Closing the absentee window from 29 to 18 days for mailing ballots puts undue pressure on all parties involved. This would tie us for shortest window with the State of Washington. That State, however, mails ballots to all of its registered voters. It is not surprising that given the voting demographics from the 2020 general election that you would propose this portion of the bill. Just call it what it is, voter suppression for registered voters who opted to mail in a ballot instead of voting in person.
- Banning Auditors from sending out blank Absentee Ballot Request forms is an interesting part of this proposed legislation as well. Apparently in Iowa, gone are the days of letting local governments with locally elected officials decide what is best for their citizens. If an elected body like the Board of Supervisors wants to budget for an ABR mailing and the elected Auditor should decide to send one, what right does the State have to discount the will of the local citizens? Again, let us just call this what it is, voter suppression based on the how parties voted in the last election.

- Let us talk about the Auditors ability to determine satellite voting locations. If this proposed legislation would have been in effect for the 2020 general election, what would have come of the hundreds of voters who utilized these locations after they attended church on a weekday? These are people who live in rural areas of Iowa like Holy Cross, Worthington and New Vienna. You will say that they can sign a petition to have a satellite location opened. That sounds like another barrier to the voter being able to have easy access to a polling location. You will say that those groups can request an Absentee Ballot request form, except don't call me for one because I can't mail them one per this proposed legislation.
- And finally, this proposed legislation gives the Secretary of State extraordinary oversight control over Auditors that threaten the home rule authority of Counties. Home rule was created to give cities and counties authority to determine their own local affairs and government in a manner which is not inconsistent with state statute. No actions were taken this past election cycle that were inconsistent with state statutes. This part of the legislation aims to have big brother like authority over locally elected officials before, during and after the election process. And if you do not like what you can see, with this proposed legislation you can now criminally charge the Auditor? You will need to stand and give examples of what went so horribly wrong with the last cycle that you feel this legislation is required. Please cite your sources.

This proposed legislation appears to be a direct response to the totally unfounded, universally disproved and out of this world claims that the 2020 general election was corrupted, mishandled or manipulated in a way to affect the outcome. Again, I ask for your sources.

The speed at which this entire process has occurred has been amazing! Bill introduced on February 16, 2021 and here we are out of subcommittee and full committee and under discussion within a week. 6 days so far for legislation that will affect how hundreds of thousands of people in Iowa get to vote. What is the hurry?

Every single part of this legislation, except for a handful of portions, is designed to suppress the vote of those who did not vote in your favor this past cycle. At least, at a minimum, acknowledge that. You have the power and control, at least be honest with your intentions to the voters. They deserve that much, and so much more.

I thank you for your time and hope that you will address my questions.



Kevin Dragotto
Dubuque County Auditor