



the Honorable Eric L. Lipman

From: Dean Barton

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Date Thursday, January 22, 2014

Subject: Response to Proposed Permanent Rules Relating to Elections as submitted
by Mark Ritchie, MN Secretary of State

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To the Honorable Eric Lipman

Subject: Response to Proposed Permanent Rules
Relating to Elections

Why now? Mr. Ritchie has had eight years to make changes to this process. Submitting this proposal during the final year of his term creates concern as to intent; especially following legislative action taken to reduce the number of people a person can vouch for on election day and in conjunction with the initiative to require photo IDs.

Wrong focus? Mr. Ritchie's proposal is an effort to make election day registration easier for those wishing to vote. In viewing his discussion, two items should be noted. First - What can be done to reduce the number of people who register on election day? Registering 40% or higher of voters on election day indicates a need to improve the process to register voters earlier rather than later. Second - Relaxing requirements on identification fails to address why the process is so difficult for certain people groups to obtain a Minnesota identification card or driver's license. Addressing this situation reduces the need to relax the list of acceptable forms of identification.

What are the concerns?

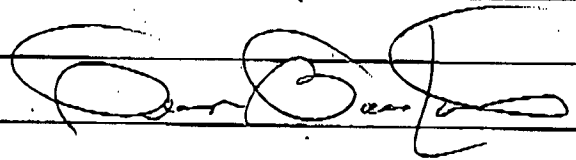
Residency - Does this proposal, an existing rule, fail to differentiate between resident and domicile? Having an address in MN does not make you a resident of the state. This is evidenced by tax laws, out-state tuition policies and the number of vacation homes in MN.

Presenting an AZ driver's license with a MN utility bill proves nothing other than domicile. If the person lives 50% + 1 day in AZ - are they not an AZ resident? Should they vote in MN? College students who come to MN solely for school may not be residents of this state or even citizens of this country. Having an address on or off campus does not change their residency status, unless they take steps to establish themselves as a resident of this state.

Creating voter registration rules that do not establish and uphold residency requirements sets up opportunities to disenfranchise the true voting population of MN.

Verifying Petitions - It seems to me that the ability of one person to decide and define the terms and conditions by which major and minor political party petitions are submitted and verified creates a process that may not be fair or equitable to all interested parties. The new language contained in Exhibit C - lines 12.1 through 16.24 should be required to go through a vetting process with members of all existing political parties in MN. Much of the feedback received by this process only addresses the framework of elections. Avoiding to address the language of this section would be potentially damaging for the people of MN if not properly established.

Conclusion - It is my opinion that this proposal, as submitted by a Secretary of State who confirms intent not to seek reelection, is poorly timed and in part - is not in the best interest of the good people of the State of Minnesota.



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