

To: Colorado Secretary of State
From: Robert Bowen, former State Representative, current candidate for District 38
Date: August 7, 2014
Re: Proposed Election Rules

I have read the proposed rules and the public comments released in advanced as of today. It is obvious that nearly all of these comments are essentially the same. It appears that someone or some organization distributed a form letter and asked people to submit it. That is fine; it is their right, but these repetitive comments should be considered as such.

Voting is the most sacred and important right in our democracy. Any attempt to suppress the vote, or make it difficult for one to exercise their vote, or compromise the unbiased counting of votes is an egregious affront to our democracy. Suppressing or manipulating the right of all citizens to vote threatens our freedom and our very existence as a free people.

The Colorado legislature has made very positive changes to our election law to make it easier to register and cast a ballot without compromising the integrity of the process, or opening the door for fraud, which despite rhetoric, exists mostly in the minds of politicians and not in reality. The Secretary of State must not try and circumvent the intent or the letter of the law by Rule—especially if the intent or the consequence is to suppress the vote, or make it harder for all citizens to register and vote.

Mail-in ballots for everyone are a great step forward. This must be allowed to work without bureaucratic interference. I do agree with the form-letter comments in one matter. We need to make sure that the secrecy of the ballot is absolute, and that the system not allow any leaking of how the vote is going prior to close of the election because it could manipulate results. So caution should be taken when removing sleeves early.

I am opposed to what appears as an attempt to change law through rulemaking. In proposed rule 2.3.4 it seems you are eliminating the ID forms the legislature said were acceptable. That appears to be an overreach. Those forms of ID were put into law after hearings, and for a reason.

I also object to the requirement that a County Clerk must purge the voters the Secretary of State orders purged within seven days. We have experience from 2012 showing that the Secretary of State often makes “mistakes” about the validity of a person to vote. The County Clerk needs time to determine if the Secretary of State was wrong in taking away the right of a person to vote. The Clerks need sufficient time to contact the voter and make a determination. This rule seems to be an attempt to disenfranchise certain voters.

If I have further comments after review, I will communicate them at the hearing.

Thank you for considering these comments.