

# Making the Best Better: Iowa's Elections

I am still working on election integrity issues. Maybe you wonder why. Maybe you think: *We have Voter ID and have done many other things to make our elections secure. Heck, Iowa has one of the best election systems in the country! Why worry about it?*

Well, I am an old 4-Her. And we had a motto in 4-H that was: *To Make the Best Better*. And that's exactly what we need to do with our election system. There are always bad actors looking to commit fraud and we have to always be working to keep them from doing it.

I introduced several bills to help shore up election integrity and below are the provisions:

1. Political research for the purposes of obtaining voter registration records is defined to include work by citizens to research and help maintain accurate voter records.
  - a. Why is this Needed: We need to protect the work of some dedicated, faithful citizens in our state who are quietly volunteering their time to clean up our state's voter rolls. I have been working with them for over a year now and they have found *thousands* of names on our voter rolls of people who have died or moved out of state – and some have been for a number of *years* – and they were still on our voter rolls. So these volunteers have been contacting our county auditors and getting ineligible names taken off our rolls. No fanfare. Just citizens who love our country and want to make sure our election process is as fair and honest as possible. Iowans owe these folks a debt of gratitude. Any ineligible person that remains on our voter rolls is an opportunity for fraud to take place. So, getting those people off our voter rolls reduces the chances for fraud in our elections. (Now you should know these citizens cannot change the voter rolls themselves at all. They cannot take off names. They must call the county auditor to get the names taken off.) Further, the work they have done already demonstrates that ERIC (the electronic registration information center), the interstate compact group which the state pays to be a member, is doing a poor job with what we have contracted

with it to do; which is, to clean up the voter rolls. Citizens are finishing the job ERIC should have done. Thankfully the Secretary of State announced a few days ago Iowa would be getting out of ERIC. Six out of the 32 states that are members of ERIC have already gotten out and it appears more will follow.

2. Allow Iowa citizens of one county to challenge the voter registration of a citizen who lives in another county or of a citizen who has moved out of state.
  - a. Why is this Needed: Currently, a citizen can only challenge the voter registration of a citizen who lives in their own county. Iowans are not only affected by the votes of those in their own county. They are also affected by the votes of those in other counties. The integrity of our elections depends on clean voter rolls. Any of us voting Iowans are affected by those on the voter rolls who have moved out of state. Ineligible persons still on the voter rolls dilutes and harms the vote of every other eligible Iowan. The regulations to help clean voter rolls should not act as barriers to actually getting that job done.
3. Make optional the use of voting machines to cast, record and count votes and allow counting by hand if a county or city chooses.
  - a. Why is this Needed: Currently, Iowa law requires the use of machines to cast, record and count votes and hinders allowing the count to be done by hand. This would remove the barriers and easily allow the option of a hand count. A machine could be used to back up the hand count. Numerous irregularities have been reported in previous elections in other states regarding the operation and use of voting machines provided by the *same* vendors we use in Iowa.
    - i. Questioning whether there was access to the internet
    - ii. Questioning whether there was capability to access the internet
    - iii. Questioning the functionality of the voting machines
    - iv. Questioning whether there was outside interference in the operation of the voting machines by bad actors
    - v. Questioning whether there was foreign interference in the operation of the voting machines
    - vi. Absolute refusal of vendors to allow and cooperate in full inspection and investigation of their voting machines in

states where substantial questions were raised regarding the conduct of their elections

- vii. Current contracts between Iowa counties and their voting machine vendor provide that an inspection and investigation of a voting machine cannot be conducted by a third party without the approval of the vendor. This puts the vendor instead of our elected officials having an upper hand in controlling our elections where the machines are concerned.

4. Requires a person registering on the day of an election to cast a provisional ballot. It will be counted when it is determined the person is eligible to vote.

- a. Why is this Needed: Current law allows a voter who registers on the day of the election to cast a regular ballot. In the days following the election is when it is determined that the voter is indeed eligible to cast that ballot. If it is determined the voter is not eligible, there is no way to remove that voter's ballot from the count. An ineligible voter will have already voted in that election. This should not be. The vote count should only reflect the vote of eligible voters. The voter's ballot should not count until it should be determined that the voter is eligible.

5. Requires the Secretary of State after an election to create a digital record of all the voters who voted in that election. This is a snapshot in time of all the voters who voted in that election.

- a. Why is this Needed: It is reasonable to have a list of all the voters who voted in an election. This type of record can be used to assist in determining if fraud occurred in an election.

6. Requires the county auditor to create a ballot log for that election. The log will show the order and timestamp for each ballot received. No personal identifiable information shall be included.

- a. Why is this Needed: A ballot log is a record that can assist in spotting any irregularities that may have occurred:
  - i. A Ballot dump was made
  - ii. Series of ballots are all by voters of one party; should expect to see a mixture of both parties
  - iii. Series of ballots all for the same candidate

- iv. Series of ballots all for one candidate and not for any of the down ballot races

There are many more things that need to be done besides these but these are what Senate leaders allowed to have a hearing and get through subcommittee for this year. I will continue to work for passage of these and much more as we go forward.

## **Bills Passed by the Senate**

The following bills have passed the Senate:

**Open Spaces Bill:** This bill requires the DNR to prioritize the maintenance and protection of open space property they already own. In acquiring land, the DNR must first consider landowner partnerships as an alternative to outright acquisition. It also requires the DOT to focus on connecting and improving existing trails. The DNR and DOT must develop a plan outlining criteria to use when land acquisition may occur and acquisition must be treated as the last tool in the government's toolbox.

**Minor Driver Permit Changes:** Allows public school students with a driver's permit to drive up to only 50 miles to extracurricular activities or to their job. This is to make it easier for students and their families, especially in rural areas when school, activities or jobs may be up to 50 miles away. Also allows students to drive between their farm's facilities that may be on different properties.

**Robotics Extracurricular Activities:** Requires the Dept. of Ed. To provide educational resources and technical assistance to schools with robotics programs. Also makes a pathway for robotics contests and competitions to take place.

**Stalking:** Makes stalking with a technological device a Class "C" felony.

**Pointing a Laser:** Makes it a crime to point a laser at an aircraft.

Feel free to contact me with ideas, thoughts, and concerns. My phone is 319-987-3021 or you can email me at [sandy.salmon@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:sandy.salmon@legis.iowa.gov) . I want to hear what you are thinking and will listen to your input. Together we will

work to make a difference for the future of Iowa. Thank you very much for the honor of representing you!

Sincerely,

***Sandy***