

MI GOP VOTER SUPPRESSION BILLS

Republicans who peddled the “Big Lie” disputing the 2020 election results are now taking their desperate effort to the next level: pushing voter suppression legislation in battleground states.

THE BILLS - STRICT PHOTO ID

SB 285 - Lana Theis, R-Brighton | SB 303 - Tom Barrett, R-Charlotte | SB 304 - Curt VanderWall R-Ludington

Eliminates the option to sign an affidavit in place of photo ID when voting in person, requires absentee voters to include a copy of their photo ID when mailing in their absentee ballot application, and prevents ballots cast by voters who don't show photo ID from being counted on Election Day. Voters attempting to “cure” their ballots and get them counted must present proof of residency in addition to photo ID even if they are in the poll book.

THE PROBLEM

Most people do not have easy access to a copier, and requiring a copy of ID is an undue and unnecessary burden on voters exercising their constitutional right to vote by mail. The affidavit is an important option for those who choose to vote in person and do not have photo ID. Our current system works just fine, and the burdens of these new rules would fall disproportionately on elderly, poor, and minority voters.

THE BILLS - BARRIERS TO ABSENTEE VOTING

SB 286 - Ed McBroom, R-Vulcan | SB 287 - Jim Stamas, R-Midland | SB 310 - Ruth Johnson, R-Holly

Limits voters' use of drop boxes, prohibits pre-paid postage on absentee ballot return envelopes, and bars the Secretary of State from sending absentee ballot applications to voters -- or making the application available on the SOS website.

THE PROBLEM

These are all unnecessary restrictions that discourage voters from voting absentee. Drop boxes need to be available to voters through 8 pm on Election Day, which is the deadline for absentee ballots to be received. Prohibiting municipalities from paying for postage on absentee ballots is an undue burden on voters. The weight of the ballot varies by the length of the ballot, which varies across the state. Voters could be easily confused by whether their ballot requires 1 or 2 stamps. And the absentee ballot application should be widely available to all voters, because all voters have the constitutional right to vote absentee.

THE BILL - DISCOURAGING REGISTRATION

SB 302 - Kim LaSata, R-Bainbridge Twp.

Adds a statement to the voter registration application that the voter does not “claim voting residence or the right to vote” in another state.

THE PROBLEM

Adding unnecessary and confusing language to the voter registration form is just another Republican tactic meant to confuse and discourage voters.

THE BILLS - MORE GOP CHALLENGES OF VOTERS

SB 290 - Rick Outman, R-Six Lakes | SB 309 - Jon Bumstead, R-Newaygo

Eliminates non-partisan organizations from credentialing challengers, allows challengers from candidates as well as political parties, and expands the types of permitted challenges of voters.

THE PROBLEM

These bills pave the way for vastly larger numbers of GOP challengers to engage in more voter intimidation and delay tactics in precincts and absentee counting boards.

THE BILL - INTIMIDATION OF ELECTION WORKERS & VOTERS

SB 276 - Jim Runestad, R-White Lake Twp.

Allows poll challengers and poll watchers to videotape and take photographs in precincts and absentee counting rooms while votes are being tabulated.

THE PROBLEM

This bill jeopardizes the constitutional right of voters to cast a secret ballot by inviting cameras into precincts and absentee counting rooms. It also encourages intimidation of election workers and observers in precincts and absentee counting boards.

THE BILLS - MORE POWER TO BOARDS OF CANVASSERS

SB 273 - Ruth Johnson, R-Holly | SB 283 - Kim LaSata, R-Bainbridge Twp. | SB 297 - Ed McBroom, Vulcan

Give unelected County Boards of Canvassers, whose role is to simply canvass the votes and certify our elections, discretionary powers over drop boxes, absentee ballot containers, and the clerks' hiring of assistants to help conduct the canvass. Video surveillance is also required for all drop boxes.

THE PROBLEM

This is a partisan power grab. County Boards of Canvassers should not have the authority to nix or limit drop boxes, disapprove absentee ballot containers, or get involved in clerks' personnel decisions. Legislation does not provide funding for mandatory video surveillance of drop boxes, which likely limits the number of dropboxes in more populated cities or townships. It is unfortunate that the Republicans view these boards as a vehicle to undermine our local clerks, who are in the best position to make these important decisions.

THE BILL - MORE PARTISAN ABUSE OF BOARDS OF CANVASSERS

SB 296 - Ed McBroom, R-Vulcan

Expands the number of people on County Boards of Canvassers in large (primarily Democratic) counties and requires at least two members of each political party to approve any action.

THE PROBLEM

There is no justifiable reason to expand these boards. This will increase the likelihood of partisan abuse and gridlock of the canvassing and certification process. Once again, this is the Republican Legislature trying to manipulate outcomes by introducing further partisan division into these important bodies.

THE BILL - IMPOSSIBLE STANDARD FOR ELECTION INSPECTORS

SB 294 - Rick Outman, R-Six Lakes

Requires that there be no more than two election inspectors from one political party for every one inspector from the other party.

THE PROBLEM

This would be impossible to achieve in many municipalities -- as recognized by current law -- and would also lead to attempts to throw out votes in areas where the standard is not met.

THE BILLS - MAKING AUDITS PARTISAN

SB 275 - Jim Runestad, R-White Lake Twp. | SB 288 - Jon Bumstead, R-Newaygo

Adds a partisan element to audits by allowing political parties to videotape audits and requiring clerks to appoint election inspectors from each party to conduct the audits (currently conducted by clerk staff).

THE PROBLEM

All attempts by the Republicans in the legislature to undermine our local clerks should be suspect. Adding partisan election inspectors to audits makes these important security checks more susceptible to partisan influence and mischief.

THE BILLS - JEOPARDIZING ELECTION FUNDING

SB 284 - Dan Lauwers, R-Brockway | SB 289 - Aric Nesbitt, R-Lawton

Prohibits the state and all local government units from accepting much-needed funding for election administration, and requires that federal funding received for election purposes be returned if it's not appropriated by the Legislature in a budget act within 90 days.

THE PROBLEM

If our clerks have the opportunity to receive financial assistance that will allow them to obtain much-needed resources like PPE, more tabulators and voting booths, drop boxes, or other critical equipment, the state Legislature should not stand in their way. And subjecting federal election funding to the budget act process invites the Republican Legislature to hold funds hostage for partisan gain.

THE BILL - UNDERMINING CITIZENS' INITIATIVES

SB 280 - Ruth Johnson, R-Holly

Makes it harder for citizens to collect initiative petition signatures, by reducing the signature-gathering period by 40 days. The new deadline for the November ballot would be mid-April rather than late May, eliminating one of the warmer months for signature collection.

THE PROBLEM

This is a naked attempt to subvert the will of the people by making an already challenging process of ballot initiatives even harder. Michiganders deserve to be able to go to the ballot with initiatives.

THE BILL - ENCOURAGING ELECTION DISINFORMATION

SB 305 - Dale Zorn, R-Ida

Makes it a misdemeanor for the Secretary of State and county and local clerks to use their name or likeness on any election-related communications paid for with public money, including educational materials and election inspector recruitment.

THE PROBLEM

The number one tool in the Republicans belt is disinformation and sowing distrust in our election process. Voters know that when they are getting information from our Secretary of State or their local clerk, they can rely on it, and they know this because their name and likeness is on the document.

THE BILL - IMPOSSIBLE DEADLINES FOR CLERKS

SB 299 - Dale Zorn, R-Ida

Creates a new, earlier deadline for clerks to finish counting ballots and report results to the County Board of Canvassers.

THE PROBLEM

Because clerks are not permitted to begin tabulating absentee ballots until 7 am on Election Day, this deadline may be impossible for many clerks to meet, and will lead to attempts to disqualify ballots not counted by the deadline.

#PROTECTMIVOTE

MORE INFO AT

michigandems.com/protectmivote