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ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

JEN DAULBY, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

July 22, 2020

Mr. Aaron Ammons
Clerk, Champaign County
1776 East Washington Street
Urbana, IL 61802

Dear Mr. Ammons,

As Ranking Member of the Committee on House Administration in the U.S. House of Representatives, which has broad jurisdiction over election issues, I write to you because of the election administration issues that plagued your county's March 17th primary election. As primary elections conclude across the country, I have identified Champaign County as one where voters are likely to face challenges casting their ballots in the November 3rd general election and where the risk of failure is simply too high. Additionally, as one of Champaign County's Representatives to the U.S. Congress, I must ensure that voters, whether Democrat or Republican, do not have their votes invalidated or compromised as a result of poor practices by your office. Included in this letter are references to the issues identified as well as oversight questions aimed at reassuring me and, more importantly, the voters of Champaign County that they will not be disenfranchised again.

a. *Illegal counting of early ballots:* Reports indicate that your office began tabulating early votes prior to Election Day, in violation of Section 19-8 of the Election Code (vote-by-mail ballots may "not be counted until the day of the election after 7:00 p.m., except as provided in subsections (g) and (g-5)." 10 ILCS 5/19-8(b). Counting ballots before Election Day could serve to provide a partisan advantage to the election official's political party, as voter turnout numbers could be processed and "get-out-the-vote" efforts could be initiated in certain areas with low turnout.

    1. What was your office's reasoning for counting early ballots prior to the March 17th primary election day?
    2. How many votes were tabulated prior to election day?
    3. How many people had access to the early counting data?
    4. For ballots that were counted early, were they stored separately from uncounted ballots?
    5. What policies and procedures has your office initiated to avoid and prevent the early counting of ballots in the future?
    6. For the General Election, how does your office intend to secure early ballots dropped off at vote-by-mail "drop boxes"?

7. How does your office intend to prevent practices such as vote-tampering and ballot harvesting in the General Election?

b. *Voter confusion regarding ballot order of candidates:* I understand that your office provided the public with a specimen ballot that incorrectly listed the ballot order of candidates for delegates to the 2020 Democratic National Convention. Studies have shown that the order of candidates on a ballot correlates with the likelihood of a candidate's election. While this may not be true in every case, we must make sure that the candidates are listed correctly and objectively.

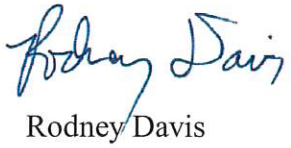
    1. What caused the misordering on the specimen ballot for candidates to the 2020 Democratic National Convention?
    2. What steps has your office taken to ensure the objectivity of listed candidates in the future?

c. *Duplicative ballots:* Finally, I also understand that your office sent duplicative ballots to Champaign County voters who requested vote by mail ballots for the primary election. This led to some voters receiving two, three, or possibly more duplicative ballots. This significant error not only poses a threat to election security, but it also serves to undermine the public's confidence in the integrity of our elections.

    1. Please describe what led to the duplicative ballots being produced.
    2. How many duplicative ballots were mailed to voters?
        i. If this number is not known, how many complaints did your office receive regarding duplicative ballots?
        ii. How many duplicative ballots were returned to your office?
    3. It would seem that a simple human quality-control check, could have prevented multiple vote by mail ballots from being mailed to a single voter, were there any human checks in place?
    4. What steps has your office taken to ensure that duplicative ballots are not sent out for the general election?

Ahead of the 2020 general election it is imperative that Champaign County address these issues to ensure voters are again not disenfranchised. I firmly believe every voter who wants to vote must have the opportunity to do so. It is also critical that the American people have confidence in their elections, and to this end, the issues seen in Champaign County are simply unacceptable. It is my hope that these oversight questions will begin to restore that confidence. Please submit answers to these questions to my office by August 14, 2020. If you have any questions, please contact my staff at the Committee on House Administration at (202) 225-8281.

Sincerely,



Rodney Davis
Ranking Member