

For Immediate Release

Democratic Candidate Disappointed in Clerk's Decision to Make Absentee Voting a Partisan Issue

Encouraging voters to vote from home in the midst of a pandemic should not be a partisan issue, the Democratic candidate for Livingston County Clerk says.

“I am saddened by our county’s top election official choosing to add more partisan polarization to what should be a very reasonable policy from the Secretary of State – encouraging absentee voting and making it easier to do so during a global pandemic,” said Jordan Genso of Brighton, who is the Democratic candidate running against Hundley for county clerk this November.

“It was an opportunity for elections officials across the political spectrum to demonstrate that bipartisanship can still grow during a time when it is in danger of becoming extinct. The residents of Livingston County have been let down by a clerk who instead feels compelled to find some way of criticizing what should be common ground.”

Michigan’s Secretary of State, Jocelyn Benson, announced on May 19th that all registered voters in Michigan will be mailed an absentee ballot application ahead of the August and November elections. On May 20th, the President of the United States tweeted false information about the decision, and threatened to intentionally harm the state of Michigan if the decision is not reversed. That same day, the Livingston County Clerk, Elizabeth Hundley, released a statement in opposition to Benson’s decision.

Hundley stated that “various sources of law in Michigan” prohibited city, township, or county clerks from mailing absentee ballot applications to voters without first receiving a verbal or written request from the voter. She then pointed out that the Bureau of Elections proceeded to

mail the applications to voters ahead of the Special Election held on May 5th. And she feels the Bureau of Elections is not legally allowed to do so again.

“Her argument is a non sequitur. At best, it appears she’s using laws that prohibit one group from doing something, and wrongly concluding that a different group must be prohibited as well,” Genso said. “She claims that she wants to encourage all voters who want to vote absentee to do so, but when presented with an opportunity to have her actions match her words, she instead twisted herself into a logical fallacy in order to stay in line with the President and his threats to the state. In other states, mailing all registered voters an absentee ballot application is a bipartisan policy, as it is done by Republican Secretaries of State, but maybe the reason it’s still bipartisan there is because those states aren’t threatened by the President to stop doing so.”

Around 30% of the voters in Livingston cast absentee ballots, and around 60% of those ballots have historically been for Republican candidates. “Voting with an absentee ballot is not a partisan issue,” Genso added. “That is why our clerk has made sure to pay lip service to the idea, because she needs the support of absentee voters if she hopes to win re-election this November. I just wish she was bold enough to have her actions align with her statements, and to do what is best for the voters in Livingston County.”

Genso is the only Democratic candidate running for the county clerk position in the August primary. He is running as part of a “Fair Elections” slate which is seeking to highlight the problem of gerrymandering at the county government level, which also includes Dan Luria for county treasurer and Ragan Lake for county prosecutor. The slate’s website is fairvotelivingston.org.

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