

SENATOR JEFF R. HOWE

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Senate

State of Minnesota

August 17th, 2022

Steve Simon
Secretary of State
180 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Secretary Simon,

I am reaching out today with hopes that you can share information relating to polling place mailers sent to voters in mail-only precincts.

After the August 9th primary, concerned voters reached out to me to discuss a mailer they received from the state and described the confusion it created when it came to election day. These voters live in a mail-only precinct. Some of the information on their postcard included contact information for the county and state election offices, as well as the address of their local polling location.

However, the address listed as their local voting location was not open for voting during the primary or on the upcoming general election day. Not only that, **the postcards sent were lacking significant information and clarifying details that would benefit voters.** These individuals stated that many of their neighbors were also confused, and because of this many simply didn't participate in the 2022 primary.

This is a serious discrepancy between the local and state election offices. Despite mailings from partisan candidates and the county elections office, this postcard caused enough confusion to keep voters from participating in our political process. Voters rely on your office, above all other resources, for the best and most accurate information. The lack of living up to that responsibility has resulted in the suppression of voter turnout and participation in our elections.

Issues like this further voter concerns over the state's ability to run free and fair elections.

To begin addressing this issue, please answer the below questions:

1. What rules or policy does the Office of the Secretary of State have related to these mailings?
 - a. Does your office specifically prescribe what polling place data or voter data is provided on these mailings?
 - b. Is there a policy dictating when these mailers are sent to voters?
 - c. If so, is this set by law or rule?

2. Is there any law or policy related to your office that dictates you provide additional or clarifying information to mail-only voters in the state?
 - a. If so, please provide that content or explain how you ensure mail-only voters get accurate voting information.
3. Does your office have full control over the content printed on the polling location postcard mailings or do the Counties involved with review of the data?
 - a. Who pays for the mailing?
4. How many political subdivisions or precincts currently vote mail-only in the state?
 - a. Could you please provide a list of that data including the name of the political subdivisions as well as when they instituted it?
5. Has this concern been brought to your attention by voters or legislators in the past?
 - a. If so, what has your office done to ensure voter outreach is accurate for mail-only voters?

I look forward to your response so I can start to better understand what can be done to address the concerns of Minnesota voters. Please respond to this letter by Monday, August 22nd at 5PM.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jeff Howe".

Senator Jeff Howe