



STATE OF MICHIGAN
JOCELYN BENSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

April 5, 2021

State Senator Ed McBroom
Chair, Michigan Senate Oversight Committee
7200 Binsfield Office Building
PO Box 30036
Lansing MI 48909

Dear Senator McBroom,

Thank you again for inviting Bureau of Elections Director Jonathan Brater and me to participate in a Senate Oversight Committee hearing on the more than 250 election audits that affirmed the integrity and accuracy of the November 2020 election.

The audits were carried out by more than 1,300 Republican, Democratic and non-partisan election clerks across the state with the support of the Michigan Bureau of Elections. They included a statewide hand tally audit of the votes cast for president of more than 18,000 randomly selected ballots that confirmed the outcome of the presidential election. Similarly, a hand tally audit of every vote cast for president in Antrim County confirmed their machines were extremely accurate. Additionally, hundreds of local procedural audits were carried out, including those of absentee ballot counting boards which confirmed election workers properly counted valid ballots that corresponded to signed envelopes that were submitted by registered voters and reviewed by the local clerks' offices.

Director Brater is happy to share his knowledge of the audit processes and findings with the committee. However, I am declining to participate at this time because I have concerns that the hearing could further the lies about the election that continue to undermine Michigan voters' faith in the outcome and are now the rationale to legislatively restrict their voting rights. Indeed, shortly after the election, the Senate Oversight Committee hosted a hearing that featured testimony from dozens of people who lacked any expertise in election administration, giving them a platform to spread misinformation and lies about the election. And while subsequent hearings did allow election officials to share facts and data that disproved the misinformation, multiple members of the committee are still sponsoring legislation based on these same lies to make it harder for Michigan citizens to vote.

Bills introduced recently would ban clerks from paying for the return postage on absentee ballot envelopes, make it more difficult to install ballot drop boxes and restrict their use on election day, and provide only one day for clerks to pre-process absentee ballots before election day, despite the fact that Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey has acknowledged that this is an insufficient amount of time and should be corrected going forward.

I'll close by saying again that, of course, I am not declining your invitation with any personal ill will. I appreciate that we continue to have a strong collegial relationship and that you have told your constituents the truth about Michigan's election. I look forward to continuing to work with you to that end.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jocelyn Benson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jocelyn Benson