

The SDGOP came out with the February 10, 2023 issue of The Majority Report. The title of the publication alone is deceiving, because the majority of the South Dakota Republican Party are hard working conservatives that have views opposite of the moderates that control the party and represented by the legislators quoted in the article. The recent SD GOP State Central Committee Meeting and subsequent County Central Committee elections are proof of that.

The first section in this issue is titled in all capital letters "REPUBLICAN LAWMAKERS ANNOUNCE PROGRESS OF BILLS IN ELECTION INTEGRITY LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE". The first paragraph states "Senate Majority Leader Casey Crabtree and House Majority Leader Will Mortenson announced today that the Stronger and Safer for 2024 legislative package is making its way through the Legislature with success. The article then proceeds to list the bills the SDGOP considers "Stronger and Safer".

SB140 – An act to revise certain provisions relating to voter registration. This bill only cleans up language and requires more reporting on data. It does nothing to fix the voter registration problems we have in South Dakota.

SB160 – An act to establish post-election audits by Sen. Wheeler is a weak attempt at any fraud prevention or discovery. This bill advertises to the world which race would be audited – written in state law. This bill is like sending your teenager to clean their room, he says it's clean, and when you check his work, the bed isn't made, the garbage is full, and you smell the rotting Taco John's burrito stuffed under the bed. Sen. Wheeler clearly did not consult with experts or even consider fully what a post-election audit is intended to do. This is like putting a band-aid on a cancerous tumor. It does nothing to fix the problem. Let's get real here folks, if you are going to write a bill, take it seriously. One citizen who testified on this bill stated "this is just a box to check off for your next campaign ad." We couldn't have said it better ourselves.

HB1165 – clearly writes into law that absentee ballot drop boxes can not be used. This just reinforces what the existing law already states.

SB55 – would ban ranked choice voting. We fully support this bill as ranked choice voting should never come to South Dakota. We believe one person = one vote.

The list of election integrity bills promoted by the SDGOP decidedly leaves out the bills that actually address the issues that are causing the problems proven by canvassing and data analysis of South Dakota voter rolls and elections results. These problems are fraudulent, perjured voter registration forms, elections with no post-election hand count verification of tabulator results, ballot harvesting in college stadium parking lots, abuse of the elderly vote, allowing anyone from anywhere voting privileges with no proof of residency, (representation without taxation) voters dying outside their county not being removed from the rolls, and citizens having to get a court order for records preservation when a dispute has not been resolved. Of course, this is not a comprehensive list, only a small sampling.

Starting with HB1104 – requiring consent to be registered to vote. The committee was presented with actual copies of voter registration forms perjured by possibly unknowing voters automatically registered to vote by the DMV and mail forwarding services. This bill was killed in House State Affairs.

HB1128 – A bill to protect the elderly during all elections was killed in House State Affairs.

HB1146 – A bill to give a citizen standing in an election challenge killed in House State Affairs.

HB1106 – Brought by Rep. Tina Mulally, this bill will actually remove deceased voters from the rolls by requiring the state voter roll list to be compared with the Social Security Death Index and Master Death File. This bill actually addresses a real problem and for some reason doesn't make the list. This was passed in House Local Government.

HB1115 – Brought by Rep. John Sjaarda, requires election materials to be preserved in the case of any civil action and requires non-federal election materials to be kept for six months to allow enough time to analyze election results after the 45-day time frame allowed for auditors to upload all data. Fixes a real problem, doesn't make the list.

SB82 – an act to limit poll watchers by Sen. Duhamel. This bill was an effort to stifle grassroots desire to be involved in their local elections, and the officials disdain for being watched. It was killed in House Local Government.

Secretary of State Monae Johnson is also quoted in the publication saying "We are committed to remaining transparent and making government work for you." The Cast Vote Records are still being hidden from the people, the real ES&S legal contract is nowhere to be found, and our FOIA requests for information are being improperly answered and must be repeatedly submitted. Our requests for meetings have been denied and the SOS office has stated in writing they are not willing to work with the Freedom Caucus on election integrity bills. Secretary Johnson also states "We are dedicated to a transparent process that every South Dakotans can believe in. As we work through this legislative session, we are already looking forward to the next one. Where we will work to be prepared with a package of bills that strengthen our elect process." We the People have made it clear we want election reform, and the time is now. There are 31 election bills in this legislative session. There is no need for the Secretary of State to OPPOSE good election bills. When there is opportunity for much needed change, it must be taken. Let's not forget, the Secretary of State doesn't make laws. The legislature does. And the legislators, representative of the people, have heard the people and worked hard on excellent legislation in response to their concerns. Any opposition to this effort by Secretary Johnson is a slap in the face to those who supported her campaign. Actions speak louder than words. We have an opportunity now. Let's use it.

There are a half a dozen excellent election reform bills coming that have been researched by the Heritage Foundation, lawyers, election integrity experts, and really seek to protect and secure South Dakota elections. Keep your eyes on HB1199, HB1232, HB1217, SB123, SB124, and SB128. Then watch how the Republican legislators on the Senate and House State Affairs Committees vote, and if the SOS office opposes them. Then you will know who is simply parroting talking points vs. who is truly interested in "Stronger and Safer" elections. Rest assured, we will be watching.

South Dakota Canvassing Group