

TO: Members of the House State, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee

My name is Doris Beaver. I cannot attend the hearing on Senate Bill 18-221 due to a family matter out-of-state, and am asking you to consider this letter as my testimony opposing the bill.

I testified on two previous occasions when a nearly identical bill was heard by a House Committee. It was defeated both times.

The Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of Colorado guarantee every citizen the right to vote on who represents them.

Senate Bill 18-221 is a blatant violation of the Constitutions of the United States and Colorado because it puts in play ways to deny the right to vote by two thirds of the population of a county on who represents the citizens of the county.

Commissioners should not be given any discretion, and certainly not more than they have now because of the options they have under current law.

As an example, at certain times such as during redistricting after the U. S. Census, commissioners can re-draw district boundaries to aid a potential commissioner candidate giving unfair advantage by placing a feared opponent into another district.

That was done in Gilpin County many years back by simply turning a large subdivision into a donut-shaped district – the people in the “hole” shifted to District 3, leaving the rest of the subdivision in District 2. A candidate intending to run in District 2 was no longer in District 2, thus eliminating the prime opponent and also preventing a contested Democratic primary in District 2.

Commissioners must represent the entire county population, not just the district from which they run/live in. There cannot be three separate set ups in a county – that would turn things into a nightmare administratively.

This Legislature and legislators should show heightened diligence when considering legislation that can even remotely give commissioners the opportunity in the number of ways presented in Senate Bill 221 to deny citizens the right to vote on who represents them. This bill violates the Constitutions we depend on to protect us and it is a sad day to see this bill keep appearing.

Here we are all these years later. Senator Coram's constituents evidently cannot find a solution to their problems with county commissioners without taking away the right of two-thirds of a county to vote on who represents them. The solution to their problems with county commissioners is to find new problem solvers.

Doris Beaver  
Gilpin County