

Josh Zygielbaum
Clerk and Recorder

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January 29th, 2020

Honorable Representatives,

Our democracy was founded on the principal that all people are created equal. It is this foundation that guarantees all United States Citizens have the right to vote and without this assurance, our democracy cannot function. Citizenship does not have a language requirement, and therefore voting does not either. The National Voting Rights Act (NVRA) takes steps towards access to voting rights, stipulating that counties with higher populations of diverse languages print ballots and elections materials in those languages. Unfortunately, the NVRA does not go far enough, neglecting to truly incorporate minority language speakers. Colorado House Bill 20-1082, Multilingual Ballot Access (Y. Caraveo/J. Gonzales), improves upon the NVRA by extending language access to a larger portion of minority language voters.

As the County Clerk and Recorder for Adams County, Colorado, my job is to set partisanship aside and ensure that all eligible voters have access to voting. As there is no language requirement in the United States Constitution, or in the great state of Colorado, it is imperative that ballots and election materials be created in a manner that allows non-English speaking voters equal access to voting. This is what HB20-1082 seeks to accomplish by broadening the language requirements of the NVRA.

In our democracy, we must consistently assess obstacles to voting access. As an election official, there is no obstacle too large to ensure eligible voters the right to vote, including cost or difficulty. As election officials, we have proven this time and time again, as legislation required our adaptation over the years. Translation services are already available in all Colorado counties and many counties have employees who speak multiple languages fluently. As the resources are already available, it is a minor uplift to translate both materials and ballots into required languages. There is certainly a cost associated with translating these materials, but as election officials, our job is not to keep costs down; our job is to ensure eligible voters have access to voting.

As elected officials and election officials, it is our responsibility to guarantee and encourage the right to vote. Increased access to voting yields a positive outcome for our democracy and for the state of Colorado. It is for these reasons that I fully support HB 20-1081 and ask the committee to join me by extending your support for this legislation as well.

Sincerely,

Josh Zygielbaum
Adams County Clerk and Recorder

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