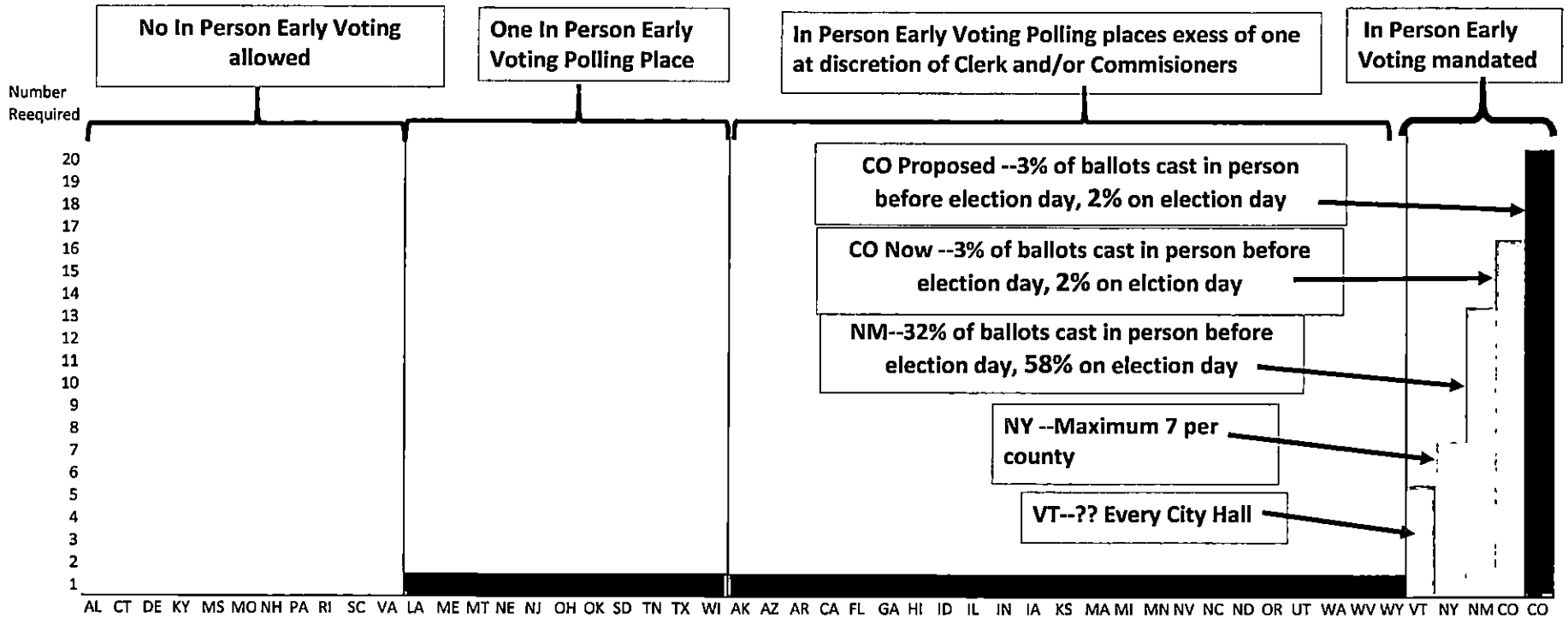


Early polling places allowed/required by state for Counties with 200,000 Registered Voters



Joint Letter to:

Honorable Chairman and Members of Senate State,
Veterans & Military Affairs Committee

From:

Douglas County School District,
Superintendent Dr. Thomas Tucker

Douglas County,
Clerk and Recorder Merlin Klotz

April 25, 2019

Dear Honorable Chairs and Members of the Senate State, Veteran and Military Affairs Committee:

For many years, Douglas County Elections [DC] and the Douglas County School District [DCSD] have enjoyed an award-winning partnership.

Each year, DCSD schedules a "teacher in-service" day on election days and opens its high schools for use as Voter Service Polling Centers [VSPC]. Students in grades 11 and 12 are given the opportunity to serve as student election judges, giving them a real-life civics lesson and allowing them to earn funds for their favorite school club.

Recently, state legislation has been introduced that could jeopardize this partnership. House Bill 19-1278 would require the same number of Voter Service Polling Centers to be open the day before Election Day (Monday) as well as on Election Day (Tuesday). This would put DCSD in a position of closing school for an additional day each year, or being forced to stop taking part in the Election Day partnership with Douglas County Elections.

Proposed amendments to HB 19-1278 contain a clause that, in theory, could allow Douglas County Elections to force the use of any public building as a polling place. Meaning DC could take the decision out of the hands of the Douglas County School District and "force" schools to be closed for an additional day while high schools serve as Voter Service Polling Centers. However, neither of our organizations believes this is the right way for one government entity to treat another.

High schools are optimum locations for use as a VSPC as they are spacious, have ample parking, are ADA compliant and Douglas County residents know that on Election Day they can vote in a DCSD high school. DC currently has 16 Election Day polling places and the bill would require that to be expanded to 20. However, nine of those 16 are DCSD high schools and another two are sheriff substations that the proposed bill would take away.

The added cost to DC Elections will be roughly \$1 million over five years that must increase pass through cost to participants in coordinated elections.

The modifications to the bill are not justified. The bill's premise is that there are underserved segments who are deprived of the ability to vote because of a notion that there are long lines and wait times. According to the Douglas County Clerk and Records Office, Colorado has the highest election participation among voter age adults of all states and second highest among registered voters and only 5% of Colorado voters vote, in person, at polling centers.

We understand that voting wait times, do, occur in places such as Denver County and El Paso County, where expensive electronic ballot marking devices are being utilized,

unlike Douglas County and others that use pen and paper voting stations, according to Douglas County Clerk and Records Office. It seems there is ample opportunity for individual counties to make necessary changes to their voting devices versus mandating changes to the entire state.

Douglas County Elections and Douglas County School District believe the bill should die as the changes to section 24 are excessive, expensive, and unjustified. This proposed legislation fails to recognize that each of Colorado's counties are different in geography, availability of VSPC locations, propensity to vote in person, etc.

We would appreciate any help that you, or your lobbyist, can provide in killing this bill as we feel it is wrong for Colorado.

Sincerely,



Merlin Klötz
Clerk and Recorder
Douglas County



Thomas S. Tucker, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Douglas County School District

HB19 1278 Status

House State, Veteran and Military Affairs Committee- Passed

House Appropriations Committee- Not Calendared

Entire House

Senate State, Veteran and Military Affairs Committee

Senate Appropriations Committee

Entire Senate

Governor Desk