

Alcorn, James (SBE)

From: sandra price-stroble [pricesf@verizon.net] **Sent:** Thu 7/9/2009 1:09 AM
To: Alcorn, James (SBE)
Cc:
Subject: Draft Proposal Re: Voter Registration and Residency Issues
Attachments:

James, First let me say I am writing as an individual member of the Harrisonburg Electoral Board and not on behalf of the Board. The statements below represent my own personal opinion.

I believe it is important that we follow the Election Laws and that we ensure that we hold fair, secure elections operating in a non-partisan manner. I also feel that it is just as important than we operate under procedures that encourage citizen participation in the election process.

Certainly if anyone fraudulently completes a voter registration application and/or votes in two localities that person should be dealt with according to the violation of law. My concern is how we approach the approval or denial of the voter registration application. This was of particular concern to me during the November election when we addressed issues regarding the registration of college students living on campus in our locality.

My concerns, however, are not just about the college student residency issues.

I believe the voter registration applications should be reviewed with the perspective that the citizen has completed the application to the best of their ability and with an honest intent. Where descretion is allowed by law, I believe the person applying for the right to vote should be given the benefit of the doubt when possible and the application should be reviewed assuming the person is answering in an honest manner with no intent to defraud. Certainly the right to vote should be protected and we must uphold the law. I do not believe, however, that the voter registration application should be reviewed in a manner that assumes the person may have given false information or reviewed with any kind of bias toward a particular group (ex. college students who wish to register to vote where they attend school for 9 to 10 months out of the year).

I believe allowing the college student to choose their place of residence and vote in the area where they attend college increases voter participation and we need to encourage that citizen participation.

As for concerns regarding the impacts of declaring residency and the need to change driver's license and pay personal property tax,etc. I do not believe that policing that activity is the role of the Registrar's office or Electoral Board. Our role is to encourage citizen participation in the election process. It is up to other government agencies to monitor issues other than voting.

Thank you for your work with the Task Force and the opportunity to comment. I do appreciate the time and efforts that the members of the Task Force have invested in this draft proposal.

Sandra Price-Stroble, member and Vice-Chair, Harrisonburg Electoral Board