



Creating a community valuing diversity, equality and religious freedom

Citizens Project

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August 5, 2011

Dear Mr. Gessler,

Citizens Project is a nonprofit organization in the heart of El Paso County, Colorado, dedicated to upholding the traditional American values of democracy, pluralism and equality throughout the Pikes Peak region. Because much of our work involves educating and empowering all types of civic engagement, but especially at the ballot box, I write to express our concern with the proposed rules and to thank you for the opportunity to deliver feedback.

As you may know, the policy of classifying voters who did not vote in the prior general election as “inactive,” created significant hurdles for many individuals who, in our recent municipal election, neither received a ballot nor notification of their inactive status. We found that this decision disproportionately impacted our most vulnerable communities; low-income families, young people, and the elderly.

Here in Colorado Springs in April, many of these voters and people who had relocated had to make two stops in order to obtain and cast a ballot: the County Clerk’s office and the City Clerk’s office. As I had recently moved, I had to do both, and it took nearly two hours, even with reliable transportation and a flexible work schedule. Many individuals who have relocated or missed an election are not as fortunate as I was, and proposed rules 2.11, 2.18.1 and 12.11.1 both reinforce obstacles to voting and create new obstacles.

We know, as you do, that the right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy. A citizen’s vote is their voice, and we encourage you to develop policies that enfranchise and empower voters, making the election process transparent and accessible for all eligible electors, irrespective of whether they’ve moved or missed an election.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share our concerns. Please feel free to contact me if you would like more information.

Sincerely,

Kristy Milligan
Executive Director