

Hughes County

104 E Capitol Avenue

Pierre, SD 57501

Fax: 605-773-7347



County Commissioners
Telephone 605-773-7477

County Manager
Telephone 605-773-7477

County Planner
Telephone 605-773-4441

June 13, 2018

SD State Board of Elections
c/o Office of the Secretary of State
State Capitol, Suite 204
500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Re: Vote Centers and e-poll books

Members of the South Dakota Board of Elections,

I am sending you this letter to encourage you to continue to support vote centers and e-poll books such as we use here in Hughes County. I understand that there is a proposal to eliminate their use in the State and I would encourage you to oppose that effort at this time.

I understand that there were some issues revolving around the e-poll books during the recent primary election. While it was a tense time for our Finance Officer and election workers, we were able to get the e-poll books back up and running in a matter of minutes with only minor disruption in voting. Only three of our seven vote centers had to be closed for any length of time, the longest being for 20 minutes. The software supplier worked closely with our county staff and election workers to come up with a solution and to get it implemented quickly.

I would hope that in the wake of the issues which came up on Election Day, that we could all work together to resolve the issues and to move forward rather than to scrap the entire system.

While vote centers are not a complete panacea, Hughes County has found there to be more positives than negatives. We feel that the vote centers are much easier for the voters. With vote centers, a voter can choose where he votes, rather than having to vote only in the precinct which he is registered. We have tried to locate our vote centers across the community in easy to reach locations with good parking. At least one is located very conveniently for state employees, since they make up a substantial number of our voters. It is also easier to find election workers for vote centers. We no longer have to get a volunteer from each party from within each precinct. We can recruit those workers from the entire county. That is a serious advantage for us with the increasing popularity of cell phones and the corresponding difficulty with reaching people.

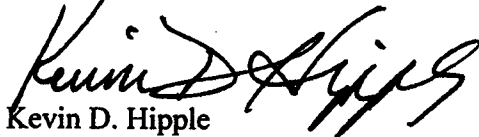
Once again, I would encourage you to allow vote centers and the use of e-poll books and would encourage your help in resolving any issues with either. This letter is not the official

opinion of either Hughes County or the County Commission. It is simply the opinion of a member of the County staff.

Thank you for your consideration and good luck in your deliberations on the future of elections in South Dakota.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to call me at 773-7477.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin D. Hipple". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "K".

Kevin D. Hipple
Hughes County Manager

cc: Norm Weaver, Hughes County Commission Chairman

YANKTON COUNTY AUDITOR
321 W 3RD St., SUITE 100
YANKTON, SD 57078



605-260-4400, Ext 0
FAX: 605-260-4494
patty@co.yankton.sd.us

State Board of Elections

The voters of Yankton County really appreciate the convenience of not being restricted to a particular voting place. People from outside town who work in Yankton can now vote during the day rather than take up their family time in the evening. There's never any doubt where you can vote. It probably helps to increase voter participation. There are bound to be technological challenges with anything new. But we didn't quit driving tractors and go back to horses when the first tractor over-heated. Electronic poll books have already been a big plus in our county and it will only get better.

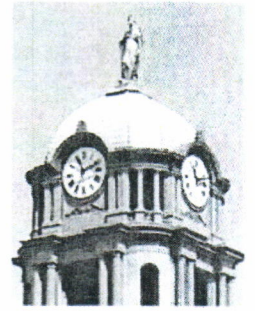
I know the electronic poll books might create new challenges for Pierre. But what's important is to make voting as convenient and efficient as possible for the people across the state.

Patty Hojem
Yankton County Auditor

Brown County Auditor

Maxine Fischer

Maxine.Fischer@BrownCounty.sd.gov



25 Market Street, Ste 1
Aberdeen, SD 57401
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June 13, 2018

Good Afternoon,

I am very disappointed that you are even considering a proposal to ban E-pollbook's and Vote Centers. The Aberdeen City Commission, the Aberdeen School Board, the Brown County Commission, our Vote Center Officials AND the residents like the idea of going to any Vote Center location to vote.

Granted, we had issues on Tuesday, June 5, 2018 but we did not have issues in 2014 or 2016. I am not sure what the connectivity issue was, but do know that our main issue was the fact that some of our older registrations do not have registration dates in Total Vote and that is what B-Pro used when generating the E-Pollbook files. When a VC Official scanned the DL – and the Pollbook could not find a particular name, the E-Pollbook brought up a name alphabetically near the one entered. The VC Official called us and we looked up the name, verified they were eligible to vote and gave the VC Official the ballot style they needed. The name and ballot type were written down by the VC Official, the DL had already been reviewed so the ballot was given to the individual.

I explained the issues we had on June 5 to the Commission this past Tuesday (Jun 12) and also explained my thoughts on corrective actions to take prior to the General. One of which, is to have a paper list available for the VC Official to use BUT if all the info had been there like it was in 2014 and 2016, the list would not have been used. I emphasize that a VC Official needs to talk to us whenever they cannot bring up a name – we authorize an Emergency Voter Card if we had made a mistake or they follow the Provisional Ballot procedure.

Hind sight – is so clear, I keep thinking IF I had done this – If I had done that. But THE IMPORTANT thing is our machine count matched our 11 Vote Center Recaps for ballots used. Our numbers are correct! As for being the last to report – it could very well happen again – I will not RUSH to get returns out just to satisfy the media, candidates, or your office. ACCURACY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN BEING DONE BY A CERTAIN TIME.

I do not intend to offend anyone in this letter, especially the Sec of State's Office, ES&S, SeaChange or B-Pro. Our support from all of you is great.

Thank you,

Maxine Fischer
Brown County Auditor



Chiesman Center for DEMOCRACY, INC.

402 Saint Joseph St., Suite 2
Rapid City, SD 57701
(605) 341-4311
Fax (605) 341-3902
www.chiesman.org

June 13, 2018

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Our Mission:

*The Chiesman Center for
Democracy promotes active civic
education and engagement.*

Shantel Krebs, Secretary of State
and Chair South Dakota Board of Elections
500 East Capitol Ave., Suite 204
Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Re: Public Comment regarding 2019 Proposed Statute Changes
Numbers 1, 6A, 6B, 9 and Petition Circulator Affidavit

Dear Secretary Krebs,

The following letter is being sent to offer public comment concerning agenda items listed on the June 18, 2018 South Dakota Board of Elections meeting.

Concerning eliminating the use of electronic pollbooks (Numbers 1, 6A, 9); electronic pollbooks are used throughout the country in 33 states. According to the *National Conference of State Legislatures*, electronic pollbooks can do much more than just check in voters:

- It allows poll workers to look up voters from the entire county or state. This can reduce time spent checking in voters, one of the bottlenecks in the voting process.
- It allows poll workers to easily redirect voters in the wrong location to the correct polling place.
- It can scan a driver's license to pull up a voter's information, avoiding data entry errors.
- It notifies poll workers if a voter already voted absentee or during the early voting period.
- Allows voters to sign in electronically.
- Produces turnout numbers and lists of who voted.
- Uses a photo to verify a voter's identity.

Several locations across South Dakota have used electronic pollbooks for years with little to no issues. We believe that voting should be easy and efficient. Electronic pollbooks provide the ability to not only quickly check voters in but also offers accuracy in voter information, data entry and voter turnout, etc. Overall, it is critical that we as a state continue to move forward to embrace new technologies that encourage and engage more of the electorate to be active voters. Eliminating electronic pollbooks gives the appearance that the state is moving backwards in this effort. Therefore, we respectfully ask that the State Board of Elections not change SDCL 12-14-17 and keep electronic pollbooks available for use in those jurisdictions that choose to use them.

Elimination of vote centers (Number 6A); vote centers are used in South Dakota as an efficient and effective way to conduct elections. For example, Huron moved away from precinct level elections held mostly in the public schools, several years ago. Now, Huron residents vote at the Huron arena (following the change – voters quickly identified where they go to vote). Large, clearly recognizable signage is provided throughout the arena allowing voters to identify their voting precinct.

Research conducted by the *Pew Charitable Trust* shows that the use of vote centers:

- is more cost-effective than traditional polling places
- reduces the use of provisional ballots – eliminating the requirement that voters cast ballots at a specific location

Additional research conducted by *Rice University* found that the use of election day vote centers increased voter turnout generally, and among infrequent voters in particular.

Vote centers are an important part of the overall election system in South Dakota. Those jurisdictions that utilize vote centers have saved taxpayers money, enfranchised new voters and have selected a well-known location that all voters know the location and are familiar with its layout. We therefore request that the State Board of Elections not change SDCL 12-14-17 and continue to allow jurisdictions the flexibility to choose to use vote centers. We also request to allow vote centers the flexibility to use electronic pollbooks and/or printed bound paper pollbooks, as they see fit.

5:02:08:07:01, SDCL 13-1-9(7), HB1196: Lastly, we continue to be concerned regarding the passage of HB1196 during the 2018 South Dakota State Legislature. HB1196, and now to be placed in rule in 5:02:08:07.01, places an undue burden on petition circulators who are already required by law to be at least 18 years of age and a South Dakota resident. 5:02:08:07.01 creates an additional seven items that circulators must present to a notary before they can circulate any petition. We question the need to ask a petition circulator to provide their current voter registration, the length of time at their current physical address and previous two addresses, a library card or utility bill, proof of in-state tuition or copy of in-state hunting or fishing license. Petition circulators already must provide proof of age and residency before a notary. These additional requirements disassociate the very essence of our initiative and referendum process: the ability to gain the involvement of those who would become knowledgeable on an issue to then circulate “just a few” petition forms among neighbors and friends.

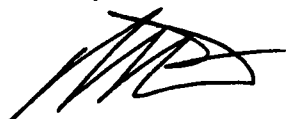
During testimony this past legislative session, proponents provided anecdotal stories of out of state petition circulators and a process gone amuck. Yet, little evidence was offered of widespread or even localized issues. Keep in mind the fact that, 200,000 South Dakotans signed petitions to place measures on this November’s ballot and that nearly all petition circulators are law-abiding residents of SD.

We therefore ask that the State Board of Elections consider reviewing this new statute and consider proposing a revision to the 2019 South Dakota State Legislature.

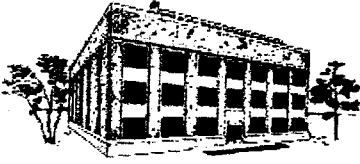
This concludes my written testimony.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony and for your service to South Dakota. As always, if you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Rob Timm, CFRE
President/CEO
Chiesman Center for Democracy



Hughes County Finance Office

Auditor

104 E. Capitol

Pierre, South Dakota 57501-2563

605-773-7451 FAX 605-773-7479

June 15, 2018

SD State Board of Elections
Office of the Secretary of State
State Capitol Suite 204
500 East Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501

Member of the South Dakota Board of Elections,

I ask you to please support the use of epoll books and vote centers in South Dakota. I believe using epollbooks and vote centers makes it easier for voters to vote on election day because they can vote at any of the locations.

Hughes County has been using vote centers and epollbooks since June 2014, and we have not had any problems until this past primary election. I don't feel that one incident should be the reason to take away the use of epoll books or vote centers. Going back to precincts would only confuse the voters who are accustomed to voting at any location.

I agree that a printed copy of the voter registration list is a good idea to have available at each vote center.

Sincerely,

Jane Naylor
Hughes County Finance Officer



Brookings County Finance Office

Vicki Buseth, Finance Officer

520 3rd Street Suite 100 ♦ Brookings, SD 57006

Phone: (605) 696-8250

vbuseth@brookingscountysd.gov

June 15, 2018

State Board of Elections
Secretary of State's Office
Business Services Building
215 East Prospect
Pierre, SD 57501

State Board of Elections:

I am writing this letter to oppose the proposed changes in statute for the removal of electronic poll books and vote centers. Brookings County has used this technology since 2013 and loves the system. Not only does the County like the use of E-poll books and vote centers but all the workers like the system as well.

I feel all counties have an aging population that is working at the polling locations and have a hard time getting election workers. The E-poll book system has improved these difficulties due to the ease of the system for the workers and the general public. When we started using the system back in 2013 we had some workers that were very skeptical. However, once they worked with it they loved the convenience and ease that it provided. We have workers that are in their 80's that continue to use the system with ease.

I also feel if the E-poll book system was banned it would reduce voter turnout. The current system is such a convenience for the voter to vote where they work or where it is convenient for them that day. If they have to go to where they are actually registered it may be a half an hour away and they may decide it is not worth the trouble.

I feel this proposed change would be taking a big step backwards in the use of technology for elections. Please consider all of the advantages of the E-poll book stems and vote centers when making your decision. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Vicki Buseth
Brookings County Finance Officer

June 14, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to let you know how I feel about using the e-poll books/vote centers for elections. For over thirty years I have worked elections in Brookings County with the majority of those as superintendent. I have experienced first hand working within precincts and/or vote centers. In observing what goes on in checking in a voter, the e-poll book process is much speedier versus using the paper method in the past. The voter appreciates the expediency in which they can get in and out when voting.

I am in favor of the vote centers, too. Again, this makes it easier for the voter. He/She doesn't have to be concerned if they are in the right precinct. He/She has the choice of voting at a place that is most convenient for them. There have been numerous times, when having the precincts, that a voter has come in and then was told they are not in the right place and will have to drive to their precinct in order to vote which could be fifteen or twenty miles away. Some decide then it is not worth the effort to cast their vote or having just gotten off work feel there isn't time to drive to their precinct before it closes.

Vote Centers/e-poll books have been used successfully in Brookings County for five years. If a poll were taken I believe most voters and poll workers would say they like having vote centers and e-poll books because it makes it faster and more convenient. In this day and age, voters want assurance, efficiency, and expediency, not having to stand in a line while names are looked up in a poll book. So if our goal is to get people out to vote, we need to be able to provide them with the fastest, easiest, most convenient voting experience ever.

**Thank you,
Sue Knutzen**



Brookings County
Board of County Commissioners

520 3rd St., Suite 210
Brookings, SD 57006
605-696-8205

BrookingsCountyCommission@brookingscountysd.gov

Friday, June 15, 2018

South Dakota Board of Elections
500 East Capitol Avenue, Suite 204
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Members of the Board of Elections:

It has been brought to our attention that there is discussion of eliminating e-pollbooks and vote centers as an option for counties and to require all citizens to vote at an assigned precinct. Brookings County has been utilizing e-pollbooks and vote centers for our citizens since 2013. The use of e-pollbooks has allowed Brookings County voters to go to any location in the county to cast their ballots. Not only has the county been using this method, but the City of Brookings, as well as the Brookings School District, have been using vote centers and e-pollbooks.

The feedback we have received from citizens has all been positive. We have many people who travel to the City of Brookings to work each day. With e-pollbooks, they are able to vote in town where it is convenient and not have to try to get to their "designated" location or vote absentee.

Brookings County has never experienced any technical difficulties that hindered voters from casting a ballot. The poll workers like the ability to scan a driver's license versus paging through a paper registration list. By using vote centers, the county has been able to eliminate four voting locations, which are difficult to find. We have also reduced the number of election day workers from 71 to 51, which has saved costs for the county.

The County Commission discusses the use of vote centers after every election year and has no intentions of going back to precincts unless forced to do so by statute. The use of the e-pollbooks and vote centers has worked very well and is appreciated by our voting public.

We ask that you keep the use of e-pollbooks and vote centers as an option for counties moving forward. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lee Ann Pierce".

Lee Ann Pierce

Brookings County Commission Chairperson

Commissioners:

Mike Bartley
Larry Jensen
Ryan Krogman
Stephne Miller

Brookings County Finance Office

Kristen Witchey, Deputy Finance Officer
520 3rd Street, Suite 100 ♦ Brookings, SD 57006
Phone: (605) 696-8250
Fax: (605) 696-8259
Website: <http://www.brookingscountysd.gov>



South Dakota State Board of Elections
c/o Kea Warne, Deputy Secretary of State
500 E Capitol Ave., Ste. 204
Pierre, SD 57501

June 14, 2018

To whom it may concern,

Brookings County, along with the City of Brookings and Brookings School District have been Vote Centers since 2013. It would be a great disappointment if we had to go back to precincts/paper poll books. Brookings County residents have appreciated the convenience of being able to vote anywhere within the county. I believe voter turnout has been greater and feel it would be a devastating blow for the voters if we took that convenience away. Not only do our voters appreciate vote centers and epollbooks, our Election Day workers love it. It speeds up the process and minimizes the chance for error by being able to scan a driver's license.

I believe that the discussion of removing Vote Centers and epollbooks is being brought forth due to some glitches that happened with the epollbooks on Primary Election Day. Brookings County didn't have any major problems on Election Day, just a minor hiccup; and we were able to operate without voter interruption. I think it was a valuable lesson to us all to make sure that we have a paper poll list available to each location but I don't feel that taking away vote centers/epollbooks is the answer!

Since when is it a good idea to go backwards? I believe that is what we would be doing by going back to a paper poll book and precinct. Is it ever a good idea to shy away from technology? No. Everything we use now days is technology. If we quit using technology for fear of it failing.....good luck placing a phone call, good luck trying to get anywhere unless you plan on walking. My point is that technology isn't just the future, its right here right now, it's today! Epollbooks and Vote Centers should continue to be an option for Counties.

I also think it speaks volumes that the counties that did experience issues are still in favor of keeping epollbooks.

Kristen Witchey
Deputy Finance Officer
Brookings County

Hyde County Auditor's Office

PO Box 379
412 Commercial Ave
Highmore, SD 57345
1-605-852-2519
Fax: 1-605-852-3178

June 15, 2018

State Board of Elections
RE: Epollbook/Vote Centers

Members of the South Dakota Board of Elections,

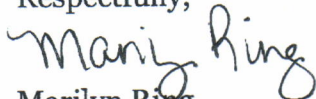
I wanted to share a brief history of our Epollbook/Vote Center use in Hyde County. We were one of the pilot counties in the state to use this technology. Hyde County has used Epollbooks at each election since the 2012 Primary. I have personally used them as Auditor since I started in 2014. Hyde County was able to purchase our Epollbooks using HAVA funds in 2015.

Hyde County has had minimal problems with this technology, even though we have had a different software vendor for each of the election cycles (2014, 2016, 2018). We had a paper pollbook and printed registration list at our Vote Center for the Primary on June 5, 2018. We were able to continue without delay when we had an issue with our printers.

The Epollbooks and adoption of a countywide Vote Center have been very well received in Hyde County. It has been cost effective for us to have one central polling place. Our voters, and especially our election workers, are very comfortable with this system. I would ask that you please support the continued use of Epollbooks and Vote Centers in South Dakota.

Should you have any questions feel free to contact me at 605.852.2519 or hydeaud@venturecomm.net.

Respectfully,



Marilyn Ring
Hyde County Auditor