



**Colorado County Clerks Association**  
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Dear Senators and Representatives:

We have a very good election system, but it is no longer meeting all the needs of our voters. As the stewards of Colorado's election system, no one knows that fact better than County Clerks. We have worked hard, through an ever-changing atmosphere, to make this state's elections accurate, secure and convenient for voters. Colorado has arrived at this system by addressing individual topics attempting to fulfill the concerns of all parties involved and focusing on the needs of citizens over political interests or personal ambitions. The Colorado County Clerks Association wants to work with you in that spirit during the upcoming Legislative Session.

We have a window of opportunity this session to address real concerns and make needed updates. We hope that with the pressures and partisanship of a presidential election behind us, we can come together to make improvements in the interests of voters and the people of Colorado, regardless of their party.

In that spirit, we have compiled a list of issues and needs to help advance the conversation in whole instead of parts and pieces. Some of the issues detailed below are matters clerks have sought in the past, and some are issues we have historically resisted. We hope this letter sets a tone of collaboration. We believe that in 2013 we can make reforms that ultimately benefit voters and improve our election system through statesmanship and compromise.

- **Mail Ballots Delivery.** Once again, more than 74 percent of voters in Colorado chose to cast a mail ballot in this past General Election. In the language of elections, that is a clear mandate from the electorate. We believe the current system - with local mail ballot elections followed by statewide polling place elections - creates confusion for voters, and we think it is time to give voters the access they overwhelmingly prefer. Creating a mail ballot delivery system not only adds convenience, it will cut costs. It can be accomplished while providing polling place service centers some prefer and many communities need, and nearly eliminate the requirement of provisional ballots for most voters
- **Voter registration deadlines.** Colorado currently requires citizens to register to vote 29 days before the general election. The Clerks Association has historically resisted moving the registration deadline to ensure we are prepared and the voter rolls are accurate. We are ready to take another look at moving the voter registrations deadlines in Colorado. Currently we have multiple deadlines regarding registration, address changes and emergency registrations, they are 29 days prior, 7 days prior if requesting a ballot by mail, and Election Day address changes and registrations in person under certain circumstances. We hope that in your leadership role, we will find partners willing to work with the clerks on reforms that make sense for voters and provide time to ensure accuracy and timeliness in the voter rolls.
- **Inactive/failed to vote status reforms.** A hyper-partisan election year saw this issue become a political football, but contentious, partisan battles over our election law only serves to undermine voter confidence in elections

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specifically and government in general. The "inactive" status was part of a compromise to ensure state and local officials did not waste money providing services for citizens, who had likely moved, died or did not intend to vote. We're hopeful that in this post-election session, we can analyze how many potential voters were affected by this system and address any needed reforms.

- **Uniform Tabulation System.** Streamlining and simplifying our ballot delivery system with mail provides opportunity to explore a uniform voting and tabulation system and reduces investment in replacement. In a phased approach, voters across the state would experience a more consistent voting experience. Many counties have systems that are 10 years of age or older. The Secretary began to address this last year and we want to help further the discussion with the broader picture in mind. It is time for the state to consider the next version of voting equipment that fits our needs best and identify funding. Considering uniform tabulation equipment could standardize the risk limiting audit procedures that are in development for 2014 implementation, and provide systems that have the technical capability to efficiently audit with this method. If every county used the same system best practices could be perfected and canvassing could also be standardized.
- **Canvass board reforms.** Canvassing board agendas vary by county, depending on tabulation equipment, voting models and county size. This is an area we are eager to address and expand the discussion on canvass board participation and roles.
- **Poll watcher reforms.** Our elections have undergone significant changes in the last decade, and it is fair to say that our regulations for public inspection have not kept up. It has always been the Clerks Association's goal to create as much transparency as possible without interfering with voter privacy and election accuracy. We are ready to work with leadership to bring our system up to date.
- **Election Night reporting.** We are committed to creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century reporting system. Clerks, all 64 independently-elected officials, are responsible for reporting to their electorate. But the public expects us to coordinate in such a way that anyone can view statewide results on Election Night. We hope to work with you and the Secretary of State to refine a system that will provide accurate, cumulative results from across the state on election night.

In the spirit of collaboration we would like to propose a meeting between the Executive Board of CCCA and Legislature Leadership the week of December 17-21 to discuss possible Elections legislation.

This session is the time to examine our election system and make needed adjustments to better serve Coloradans. We hope this letter – and the compromises we have laid out - sets a tone of collaboration among all of us: Republicans, Democrats, lawmakers, election officials, interest groups and voters. Let's seize this opportunity to improve Colorado together.

Most Sincerely,

Donetta Davidson  
Colorado County Clerks Association  
Executive Director