



OFFICE of the COUNTY CLERK

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Daniel C. Krueger
County Clerk

Sherri A. Sayles
Chief Deputy

March 1, 2007

Del South-Clerk
Georgetown Charter Township
P.O. Box 769
Jenison, MI 49429

Re: Permanent Voter list

Dear Del,

In response to your letter dated February 21, 2007 regarding sending absentee voter applications to those registered voters on your permanent list, let me give you the history and direction the county has taken in this regard.

In 2004, when the consolidation of elections was in the process of being passed and put into effect, the city and township clerks met and discussed the issue of sending out absentee applications to anyone legally entitled to receive an absentee ballot as well as those who may have indicated in the past they wish to receive the same. This discussion took place because there were some local units who were already sending these applications and others who were not.

The primary issue was one of equal access to the ballot as well as the ability of citizens who were temporarily living outside the district of knowing there was an election and being able to vote. The equal access issue is of primary concern where millage issues as well as candidates are concerned. The choice was given to the cities and townships at an Ottawa County Clerks Association Meeting as a recommendation from a committee comprised of city and township clerks to send applications and develop a permanent list or not to send applications and keep a permanent list.

It was the unanimous decision of the clerks that everyone would keep a permanent list and send applications. The original list was to include all those who were eligible, such as those 60 and over, but mindful, as time went on, that voters could request their names be taken off the list if they so desired.

At the December 2006 Christmas Party of the Association, the clerks were given an opportunity to provide suggestions for changing the contract for the conduct of school elections and there were no suggested changes even though the issue of sending absentee applications from the permanent list was brought up. The resolution passed in 2004 was again discussed by the clerks at their meeting on February 9, 2007 and there was no opposition at that time.

Since I am the coordinator of the school elections, that direction being given to me as a unanimous decision, was relayed to all the local clerks as their responsibility in the conduct of the school elections. Each clerk, as you are aware, then signed a contract to participate in the school election process as I have directed which includes the sending of the applications to all those on the permanent absentee voter list. This contract is good for the two year period as the law stipulates.

Thus, you are directed to send out applications for absentee ballots to anyone whose name appears on your permanent absentee voter list, including those 60 and over unless the voter has specifically requested not to be included.

Over the past two years we have had some significant increases in voter turnout in school elections due to the absentee voter process. Many of our citizens have commented favorably about getting an application so they could participate. You must admit, without the democracy of open and equal access to the ballot our system would falter. The cost is the price the taxpayer absorbs for having a democratic process.

I hope this clarifies the process and gives you the background for sending these applications. The contracts were signed in January of this year for another two year period so this process will be in place until 2009.

If you have any other questions or comments please contact me. Thanks for your involvement in the process and your dedication to equity in ballot access.

Sincerely,



Daniel C. Krueger, CCO, MCCO
Ottawa County Clerk
School Elections Coordinator