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Contact: mcarpio@equalitystate.org, nanlockw@gmail.com, rebekah@fitzstrategies.com

Nonpartisan Organizations Respond to Secretary of State’s Proposed Rules Restricting Voter Access

Leaders across Wyoming describe concerns about negative impact on bona fide voters

CHEYENNE, WY – Nonpartisan organizations, their leaders, and supporters pointed out the impact proposed rules would have on Wyoming voters in the upcoming elections. They emphasized the need to protect voters’ access to the polls while maintaining the current safe, secure, and fair system Wyoming already has.

“Our mission is to make it easier to vote and harder to cheat,” said **former HD5 Representative Shelly Duncan, Chairwoman of the Board of Wyoming FREE**. “The laws in place in Wyoming already address the Secretary’s concerns about election security. The proposed rules will keep qualified Wyoming voters from voting—while not making our elections any safer.”

“Voting is what gives our government its legitimacy,” said **Marguerite Herman of the League of Women Voters**. “We share the concerns of everyone in this room about election integrity. We believe our elections should be free and fair.”

Herman continued, pointing out that voting had been compared by the crowd to shopping at Walmart, buying Sudafed, or getting a hunting license, “Voting is not like anything else. It is singular in its importance. I encourage everyone not to compare it to things that are not enshrined in our Constitution.”

Engaging more voters is something that needs our attention, according to **Gail Symons of Civics 307**, who tracks voter participation in Wyoming. She also highlighted how rare election fraud is

in Wyoming. “The lack of substantiated voter fraud makes the point that our processes and procedures are already so robust that it prevents fraud.”

Many testified the potential negative impacts to the average person. AARP and more than one citizen pointed to the impacts on Wyoming’s aging population and any senior who moves in with their children or lives in a nursing home but isn’t on the contract. Others explained there are people in their households not on the utility bill or without a lease or mortgage in their name. These are *bona fide* voters who may have legally voted in Wyoming their whole adult lives and might suddenly be barred from the polls.

Equality State Policy Center (ESPC) and AARP both pointed out that these proposed rules are poorly timed and might be confusing to older voters.

ESPC also highlighted that the Joint Interim Corporations, Elections and Political Subdivisions Committee worked on the issue of durational residency in the interim, in cooperation with the Wyoming County Clerks Association. The Committee advanced a bill that will work its way through the upcoming legislative session. The legislative process should be allowed to play out.

“When fair elections are under threat, it is our mission to respond,” said **Marissa Carpio, Policy Director for Equality State Policy Center**. “We must strike a balance between safeguarding the integrity of our elections and guaranteeing that all eligible citizens have unimpeded access to the ballot box.”

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The Equality State Policy Center is a non-partisan, coalition-based organization. We advance fair elections and transparent government in support of all Wyoming communities.

The League of Women Voters is a **nonpartisan, grassroots** organization working to **protect and expand voting rights** and ensure everyone is represented in our democracy. We empower voters and defend democracy through **advocacy, education, and litigation**, at the local, state, and national levels.

Wyoming FREE works for Fair, Reliable, and Ethical Elections. Wyoming FREE is a nonpartisan organization committed to making it easier to vote and harder to cheat in Wyoming elections.

Civics 307 seeks to provide greater visibility and understanding of the state government in action so that a well-informed citizenry can become more engaged and better served.