



STATE OF MICHIGAN
JOCELYN BENSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

December 15, 2020

Representative Matt Hall
63rd House District

Dear Representative Hall:

Thank you for the invitation to speak about the Nov. 3 general election with the House Oversight Committee. I am aware of the hearings the Committee has conducted, and am concerned that contrary to your desire to “get to the bottom” of election questions, they are instead amplifying already debunked conspiracy theories and previously disproven claims of people who lack basic knowledge of election administration, and in doing so undermining the integrity of the election and wounding our democracy.

In a recent hearing of your committee, leadership was handed over to an out-of-state private attorney hired by a political candidate who lost in the recent election. That individual proceeded to spout false and baseless accusations against Michigan public servants - including more than 1,600 election clerks and tens of thousands of election workers. He called Wayne County’s chief judge, a Republican appointee, a “hack” and suggested various individuals should be prosecuted based on zero evidence of wrongdoing. Just prior to the hearing this same attorney suggested that you and your colleagues would be threatened if you did not act as he would like and overturn the outcome of the election, despite the fact that Attorney General William Barr, the FBI and CISA have confirmed its security and accuracy. Indeed, the hearing was deemed such an embarrassment, lacking in merit and any form of decorum, that it was mocked on national comedy shows as a clear waste of taxpayer dollars.

Given these findings at the federal level, in addition to the factual refutations disproving fraud allegations by election officials and judges and justices of both political parties across the state, I believe that the Committee has a responsibility to state unequivocally and publicly that the results of this election are an accurate reflection of the will of Michigan’s voters. This is the truth, as certified by our State Board of Canvassers, and it is important that every leader acknowledge this in order for us to move forward and solve many of the critical issues ahead of us. In fact, I expect it would be impossible to have a substantive conversation about advancing election legislation if its participants continue to claim recent meetings with long-dead Latin American leaders and other fantastical fabrications are somehow connected to how Michigan citizens exercise their right to vote.

Since this election was settled and has been found to be conducted fairly and accurately, I look forward to having a conversation with any willing lawmakers about reforms and improvements we can make going forward for future elections, with an eye towards making data driven decisions and implementing solutions to ensure all citizens can have rightly placed faith in the results of our elections as an accurate reflection of the will of the people.

Most importantly, the state legislature must better support our local election administrators. They are resourceful, resilient, and dedicated public servants who will always find a way to serve their community no matter how many challenges are placed in front of them. But they do need your assistance. Particularly beneficial legislation that already has bipartisan support would provide election clerks more time to process absentee ballots before election day, and give military members and their spouses overseas the opportunity to securely return their ballots electronically. I would also like to see the Committee advance HB 6177-6181, which you co-sponsored in September at my office's suggestion and that would, among other things, help clean up the qualified voter file.

Thank you again for the invitation to meet with the Committee, but at this time, given the concerns expressed above, I cannot in good conscience accept.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jocelyn Benson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jocelyn Benson
Secretary of State