



THE  
**BLACK DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS**  
OF COLORADO

July 6, 2017

The Honorable Wayne W. Williams  
Secretary of State of Colorado  
1700 Broadway, Suite 200  
Denver, Colorado 80290

Dear Secretary Williams:

The undersigned members of the Colorado General Assembly address this letter to urge you to resist the request from the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity for personal confidential voter information and recommendations for policy changes that could undermine Colorado's strong elections laws. In the context of President Trump's false claims of massive, systemic voter fraud, we are deeply concerned that the commission's unnecessary requests will be used to push policies that will undermine access to the ballot for eligible citizens, compromise our election integrity, and utilize fear to increase voter suppression across the country.

As elected officials, we believe not only in the strength of our 241-year-old democracy, but also that the very bedrock of our nation's founding is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Our democracy requires that every election is open and participation is available to all eligible voters, and is carried out with integrity. Our state continues to be a leader in elections reform, with a vote by mail and registration process that improves the overall integrity of our state's elections, safeguards against fraud, and facilitates voter participation. Our system works: Colorado consistently ranks at or near the top of states for overall turnout.

The underlying reasoning for the commission's request is to attempt to substantiate the President's claim that during the 2016 elections massive voter fraud occurred, with millions of illegal ballots cast. Voter fraud in the state of Colorado and nationally is exceedingly rare; in fact, as you know, the state Attorney General's office has only prosecuted two voter fraud cases since 2012. The facts simply do not support the notion that burdensome restrictions passed down from the federal government are necessary to protect against voter fraud. While we encourage information sharing between states to improve their election laws, enhance access to the ballot, prevent fraud and enhance system security to safeguard against outside meddling, we don't believe that to be the intent of the commission. Very likely, the types of reforms that would come down from the federal commission would have very real consequences in restricting access to the ballot for eligible voters.

Access to the ballot box is a bitter chapter of the American story. In the Jim Crow-era South, poll taxes, literacy tests and intimidation tactics were used as barriers to the right to vote for African Americans. We are wary of this commission's objectives, and believe that putting forth restrictive measures to voting and using intimidation tactics falls far short of Colorado's values, and the underlying question behind the Presidential Commission's inquiry sounds awfully familiar.



THE  
**BLACK DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS**  
OF COLORADO

The central responsibility of Colorado’s secretary of state is to protect our state’s voters and ensure the security of our elections. Likewise, ensuring access to the ballot for Coloradans and supporting voting rights are essential to our democracy. Our state has always been forward thinking about ensuring that Coloradans have their voices heard through a fair and accessible electoral process. Our state should not act to abet this commission in its effort to give credence to unfounded claims that voter fraud is rampant, to intimidate voters and to restrict access to the ballot – which disproportionately impact minority and working class communities – in the name of “voter fraud prevention,” as we have seen repeatedly through the years and in states across America.

This week as we all celebrated our nation’s independence we urge you to stand up for voting rights, stand up for our election system, and stand up for the right of the people to hold their government accountable by casting their ballot at the ballot box.

Mr. Secretary, now is not the time to stir confusion and sow doubt about our electoral process, especially in Colorado, where our elections system serves as a model for the rest of the nation. Instead, it is our job, together, to ensure the integrity of our process and to work together at the state level to make sure that all eligible Coloradans can exercise their right to vote, regardless of their race or income. Join us by publicly opposing the Presidential Commission’s federal overreach, and protecting Colorado’s ability to run free and fair elections.

Sincerely,

The Black Democratic Legislative Caucus of Colorado

State Representative James Coleman – House District 7

State Representative Leslie Herod – House District 8

State Representative Tony Exum, Sr. – House District 17

State Representative Janet Buckner – House District 40

State Representative Jovan Melton – House District 41

State Representative Dominique Jackson – House District 42

State Senator Rhonda Fields – Senate District 29

State Senator Angela Williams – Senate District 33

Joined by

State Representative Susan Lontine – House District 1

State Representative Alec Garnett – House District 2

State Representative Crisanta Duran – House District 5

State Representative Paul Rosenthal – House District 9

State Representative Mike Foote – House District 12

State Representative KC Becker – House District 13



THE  
**BLACK DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS**  
OF COLORADO

State Representative Chris Kennedy – House District 23  
State Representative Diane Mitsch Bush – House District 26  
State Representative Dafna Michaelson Jenet – House District 30  
State Representative Joe Salazar – House District 31  
State Representative Adrienne Benavidez – House District 32  
State Representative Faith Winter – House District 35  
State Representative Mike Weissman – House District 36  
State Representative Daneya Esgar – House District 46  
State Representative Jeni Arndt – House District 53  
State Representative Donald Valdez – House District 62