



Mail Ballot Elections

Introduction

In January 2006 the El Paso County, Colorado, Clerk and Recorder began what was labeled an Election Education & Research Task Force. Dr. Corry, representing the Equal Justice Foundation, was invited to be a member of that task force.

However, from the outset that task force was basically a forum for the government's view on how elections should be run with little opposition tolerated and none invited.

A series of presentations on mail ballot elections (MBE) were made in the fall of 2006 and spring of 2007 after which Dr. Corry asked the county clerk, Robert Balink, for a chance to present the opposing viewpoint and outline the problems. The response to his request is given below in the following emails.

The opposing viewpoint

----- Original Message -----

From: Dr. Charles E. Corry <ccorry@ejfi.org>

To: Robert Balink; John Bass

Sent: Thu May 31 17:17:34 2007

Subject: Mail ballot elections - the opposing viewpoint

Now that government agencies have had a chance to present their views on mail ballot elections how about giving me a chance to present the opposing viewpoint at an election commission meeting?

Chuck Corry

Charles E. Corry, Ph.D., F.G.S.A.

President, Equal Justice Foundation <http://www.ejfi.org/>

455 Bear Creek Road

Colorado Springs, Colorado 80906-5820

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Curriculum vitae: <http://www.marquiswhoswho.net/charleselmocorry/Default.aspx>

to which the El Paso County election director, John Bass, replied:

Subject: RE: Mail ballot elections - the opposing viewpoint

Date: Thu, 31 May 2007 17:22:14 -0600

From: □ John Bass □ <johnbass@elpasoco.com>

To: □ Dr. Charles E. Corry □ <ccorry@ejfi.org>

Cc: □ Robert Balink □ <RobertBalink@elpasoco.com>

We'll do so. I'm not sure when of the next date, but the whole purpose of the Task Force is for all to be exposed to various viewpoints and develop opinions accordingly...

but there was disagreement in the ranks and the county clerk, Bob Balink, sent the following:

Subject: Re: Mail ballot elections - the opposing viewpoint
Date: Thu, 31 May 2007 17:26:36 -0600
From: □Robert Balink□ <RobertBalink@elpasoco.com>
To: <ccorry@ejfi.org>

Chuck,

We have given you plenty of chances and you have already expressed your views in our MBE discussions.

What we'd prefer is a white paper on □How to Make MBEs Work.□

That would be constructive.

And your attacks on the Secretary of State are not justified nor helpful either.

Bob

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld

From: Dr. Charles E. Corry <ccorry@ejfi.org>
To: Robert Balink
Sent: Thu May 31 20:18:57 2007
Subject: Re: Mail ballot elections - the opposing viewpoint
Mr. Balink,

Excuse me, but I had the impression you were working for me, rather than the reverse. Therefore, I will not be writing a white paper on how to make mail ballot elections work. In my professional opinion you can have an honest election, or you can have a mail ballot election, but you can't have both at the same time.

While I have consistently expressed my opposition to mail ballot elections I have never been given the opportunity to present the evidence against them. Apparently you don't want to hear that evidence.

The □attacks□ on the SoS and his bureaucrats are entirely justified by the multiple failures of he and his staff, as well as his predecessors, to address the numerous issues repeatedly brought to his attention by many citizens. As pointed out, the SoS doesn't work for you and the other county clerks, or for the voting machine vendors, but for the citizens of Colorado. And so long as the SoS continues to fail in his duty to provide honest and secure elections I shall continue to exercise my First Amendment rights to petition for redress and speak as freely and widely as I can.

The credibility of Colorado's county clerks is even more endangered than Coffman's. The SoS currently has five (5) counties on a watch list for severe and numerous election errors. You would be well advised to listen to expert opinion other than that from the closed circle of Colorado election officials and voting machine vendors. I make no claim to have all the answers but I've certainly identified numerous problems with mail ballot elections that deserve to be heard. Otherwise your □election commission□ is simply a sham front for government propaganda.

Charles E. Corry, Ph.D., F.G.S.A.

Subject: Re: Mail ballot elections - the opposing viewpoint
Date: Thu, 31 May 2007 20:43:14 -0600
From: □Robert Balink□ <RobertBalink@elpasoco.com>
To: <ccorry@ejfi.org>

With **Mr.** Corry's response I rest my case, your honor.

Charles- don't be mad, get even □ provide real evidence to the Secretary of State, the Election Assistance Commission, legislators, etc. and the media □ as you have been doing. They can make change.

Now, if you will recall you were given the opportunity to present your issues about MBEs once again this year during our MBE discussions at our Election Research & Education Task Force and folks including Councilman Heimlicher challenged some of your □outrageous□ claims.

And since El Paso and many other counties will be conducting MBEs this November we all have a duty to make them successful.

Once again, I fully support all those who want to ensure fair and honest elections and improve them in every way possible- however you and I share a different view in that I believe- for the most part- that elections are fair, secure and honest now.

Think about the □white paper□ and how you would ensure an honest MBE- then you could get credit for helping to make that happen rather than just creating fear among those less informed about elections.

In all intellectual conversations and debates the best are those who can articulate both sides of an issue. Give it a try.

Best regards,
Bob

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld

To: □Robert Balink□ <RobertBalink@elpasoco.com>
From: □Dr. Charles E. Corry□ <ccorry@ejfi.org>
Subject: Re: Mail ballot elections - the opposing viewpoint
Cc: □Council Member Tom Gallagher□ <TGallagher@springsgov.com>, John Bass <johnbass@elpasoco.com>

With **Mr.** Corry's response I rest my case, your honor. [Corry's response in Courier font and blue.]

[Mr. Balink, you have not made a case. You are simply arguing ad verecundiam in favor of mail ballot elections and denying me an opportunity to speak.]

Charles- don't be mad, get even □ provide real evidence to the Secretary of State, the Election Assistance Commission, legislators, etc. and the media □ as you have been doing. They can make change.

[As you may recall I have been speaking out against DREs for many years now. Florida and New Mexico have now abandoned those machines, and election officials in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, have gone to jail for improper use of Diebold machines such as the ones you have. So the efforts of my colleagues and I have had major impacts.]

CAMBER, which I lobby for, helped defeat Amendment 28 in 2002 and in El Paso County 63% of the electors voted NO on all mail ballot elections.

So we have made changes but county and city clerks, such as yourself, have chosen to ignore the voice of the people and move to mail ballot elections anyway. However, you can make change as well if you examine and agree to hear the available evidence.

At this point anger may well be appropriate. I would also point out that I took my sensitivity training with Marine Corps infantry.]

Now, if you will recall you were given the opportunity to present your issues about MBEs once again this year during our MBE discussions at our Election Research & Education Task Force and folks including Councilman Heimlicher challenged some of your "outrageous" claims.

[As I recall the vote by the city council after my testimony was only 5 to 4 in favor of a mail ballot election, not an overwhelming majority, and the issue was decided primarily on the basis of cost.

I would also note that after I outlined the problems with the 2003 Colorado Springs mail ballot election, Mayor Rivera rose and publicly pledged never to hold another mail ballot election as long as he held office (so much for a politician's promise). Following this is an email from Council Member Tom Gallagher expressing his concerns with mail ballot elections. So perhaps there is something to my evidence that a majority of voters are concerned about as well?

Councilman Heimlicher has always struck me as intellectually challenged and he is certainly no authority on elections of any kind. So, once again, you are arguing ad verecundiam, a fallacy you really should learn to avoid. I was also unaware that Heimlicher stated that some of my claims were "outrageous." Thus, you might also review the fallacy of ad hominem arguments, often regarded as the last refuge of a scoundrel.

And I don't think democracy was ever intended to be a cost-effective form of government. Thus, basing an election on cost is fallacious as well.

I've also noted that when anyone wishes to denigrate my research I suddenly become "Mr. Corry." Makes one wonder why they keep listing me in Who's Who in America, Who's Who in the World, and similar places?]

And since El Paso and many other counties will be conducting MBEs this November we all have a duty to make them successful.

[No, your, and my duty is to ensure fair, honest, and secure elections using a secret ballot, something my evidence suggests is clearly impossible with a mail ballot election.]

Once again, I fully support all those who want to ensure fair and honest elections and improve them in every way possible- however you and I share a different view in that I believe for the most part- that elections are fair, secure and honest now.

[And if Colorado, and elections elsewhere are so "fair, secure and honest now," why are five Colorado counties on probation for election

problems and election officials across the country resigning, being sent to prison, or under unprecedented attack by citizens for election problems? And it would really help if Kathyrn Young would learn arithmetic.]

Think about the "white paper" and how you would ensure an honest MBE- then you could get credit for helping to make that happen rather than just creating fear among those less informed about elections.

[I have already written a "white paper." It is titled Why Mail Ballots Are A Bad Idea, www.ejfi.org/Voting/Voting-77.htm, and I've used data from El Paso County to disprove the claims made for mail balloting. If you are really interested in avoiding at least the common errors you might consider reading my essay.

What you ask for is simply wishful thinking and you would apparently like my imprimatur on something more destructive for our country than the Iraq war.]

In all intellectual conversations and debates the best are those who can articulate both sides of an issue. Give it a try.

[As I recall I began this debate with a request to speak in opposition to mail ballot elections. You are the one apparently denying me an opportunity to articulate the other side of this issue.]

Best regards,

Bob

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld

Subject: RE: Mail ballot elections - the opposing viewpoint

Date: Fri, 1 Jun 2007 09:19:21 -0600

From: "Robert Balink" <RobertBalink@elpasoco.com>

To: "Dr. Charles E. Corry" <ccorry@ejfi.org>

It is very sad that you ignore THE TRUTH...saying something over and over does not make it the TRUTH...although, as you are fully aware, some people may believe you nonetheless. Very sad.

Bob

Robert C. "Bob" Balink
El Paso County Clerk & Recorder
(719) 520-6202 direct
(719) 439-0120 cell

While it is obvious that logic is not Mr. Balink's long suit it was apparently necessary to quash any possibility of dissenting opinions and the election commission was then put on "hold."

From: "Angelique Seay" <angeliqueseay@elpasoelections.com>

Cc: □'Liz Olson' □ <lizolson@elpasoelections.com>, <terrysholdt@elpasoco.com>, <robertbalink@elpasoco.com>, Keri Ashley <keriashley@elpasoelections.com>
Subject: Election Education & Research Task Force Committee
Date: Fri, 15 Jun 2007 08:43:34 -0600

Good morning:

The Election Education & Research Task Force Committee will be put on a summer hiatus. The decision was based upon the direction of the committee in recent months and our preparation for the upcoming November election. In early fall, our office will reevaluate the function of the Committee to determine what direction it may take in the future. We will notify all Task Force members with any changes concerning meetings. We may incorporate the Election Task Force into a Citizens Academy we are developing for the office this fall- we will keep you posted on that project as well. Thanks for your participation. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments. Have a great summer.

Regards,

Angelique Seay

Voter Registration Coordinator
El Paso County Election Department
(719) 520-6273
angeliqueseay@elpasoelection.com

and the next thing we heard was that the El Paso County election director, John Bass, one of the most competent men we've met in government, had resigned.

Bass resigns; election calamity next?

*Cara DeGette degette@csindy.com
Colorado Springs Independent
www.csindy.com/csindy/2007-06-21/publiceye.html*

After 21 years □ many of the recent ones spent banging his head against a wall □ John Bass has given up county government. As of June 30, the man who started as a real estate technician, twice was elected assessor, and most recently headed up the county's election department will retire.

And in ever-calm, respectful tones, Bass, 51, explains why.

□I had reached the point where being around the board of county commissioners and their so-called administrators was not a healthy environment for me anymore, □he says. □There's no hard feeling, other than I've never been around such a corrupted operation □ corrupted, if not within a legal context, then within an ethical context.

□This county is better, and its people should demand [better]. □

Bass, a Republican and lifelong Colorado Springs resident, essentially says that when you conclude it's time to end your career, you get off the stage. Life in county government, he adds, isn't likely to change any time soon.

Between 1998 and last year, as assessor, Bass reduced his department staff by 20 percent while exponentially increasing services. *It can be done*, he says, of making government more efficient when you spend tax dollars in the right ways.

He championed rank-and-file county employees, and complained when they didn't get the raises they deserved in working conditions where morale was (and is) often below rock-bottom. He spoke out when one of his employees complained of being the target of sexual harassment by a county commissioner, and when the board was considering a gun-friendly work environment.

I have not been one to shy away from controversy in the county, Bass says.

When Bass was term-limited after eight years as assessor, Clerk & Recorder Bob Balink hired him to head the elections department. Bass says he has a deep respect for Balink, and, in fairness, concedes he didn't find the job there particularly rewarding. However, what he says next is cause for everyone in El Paso County to jump to attention: Commissioners have slashed by one-third the amount the election department asked for to pull off the 2008 elections.

Did we mention that next year is a pivotal presidential election year, and Colorado likely will be a hotly contested, battleground state?

Bass is calm as he describes the process by which he figured out how much to request. Exceedingly calm, given the catastrophe that could occur.

Using the historical baselines of the 2004 and 2006 presidential and general elections, the office determined it would need an estimated \$1.8 million to successfully pull off the election, Bass says.

Keep in mind that El Paso County is now the most populous county in the state. That translates to 370 precincts and 190 polling places. Nearly 2,000 judges must be hired and trained to help conduct the election. Temporary workers must be found.

In addition, a 2002 federal law requires the state to have a centralized system in place. Colorado is under sanction by the Department of Justice for not already having that. In fact, it's still in the developmental design stage.

The 2008 presidential election is not exactly the best time to be rolling out a new system. But hey, that's tough. And the costs for any kinks at the local level will be eaten locally.

Finally, another federal law requires all jurisdictions provide paper ballots to any and all registered voters. Now, this is really simple math: Say there are 60,000 ballots needed for the primary, and another 300,000 for the general election. The ballots, Bass says, cost 80 cents each. That comes to \$288,000 alone.

Yet the perpetually cash-strapped commissioners slashed the \$1.8 million request almost by one-third, to around \$1.2 million. Bass calls this the *height of irresponsibility*.

Their ignorance is exceeded only by their arrogance, he says of the commissioners, who approve the clerk & recorder's budget.

Does this spell disaster for next year's election?

I hope it's not, Bass says, *for Mr. Balink and the people of El Paso County*.

Communications with Colorado Springs city council regarding mail ballot elections

Subject: Registered voters in Colorado Springs

Date: Fri, 6 Apr 2007 09:15:01 -0600

To: Lionel Rivera <lrivera@ci.colospgs.co.us>, Margaret Radford <radford4council@aol.com>, Larry Small <lsmall@ci.colospgs.co.us>, Scott Hente <shente@ci.colospgs.co.us>., Jerry Heimlicher <jheimlicher@ci.colospgs.co.us>, Tom Gallagher <tgallagher@ci.colospgs.co.us>, Randy Purvis <rpurvis@ci.colospgs.co.us>, Darryl Glenn <dglenn@springsgov.com>, Bernie Herpin <bernie@herpins.com>

From: Dr. Charles E. Corry <ccorry@ejfi.org>

Cc: Robert Balink <RobertBalink@elpasoco.com>, John Bass <johnbass@elpasoco.com>, gtop@gazette.com, Ed Sealover <sealover@gazette.com>, jweiss@csindy.com

Mayor Rivera and City Council,

There is a gross error on the tabulation of the Colorado Springs April 3, 2007, election results posted at <http://www.springsgov.com/Page.asp?NavID=6712>. The number of registered voters for Colorado Springs given there is 147,857. However, as of March 26, 2007, the El Paso County Clerk and Recorder listed 222,533 registered voters in Colorado Springs.

I also note that if 60,935 ballots were actually cast in this election that voter turnout was only 27%, not 41% as suggested by the city clerk.

It is these kinds of simple arithmetic errors that destroy trust in elections and faith in your city clerk's ability to conduct an election, particularly a mail ballot election. It also seems quite likely that additional investigation of the April 3rd election results would reveal even more errors by both Diebold and the city clerk.

Charles E. Corry, Ph.D., F.G.S.A.

President, Equal Justice Foundation <http://www.ejfi.org/>

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Personal home page: <http://corry.ws>

Curriculum vitae: <http://www.marquiswhoswho.net/charleselmocorry/Default.aspx>

Subject: RE: Registered voters in Colorado Springs

Date: Sat, 7 Apr 2007 09:35:47 -0600

From: Council Member Tom Gallagher <TGallagher@springsgov.com>

To: Dr. Charles E. Corry <ccorry@ejfi.org>

Dr. Corry,

The cornerstone of our free society, and the foundation of representative government is built upon the concept of Election Day . Our military presence made a free election possible for the people of Iraq, and even though a blue index finger could have marked you for death. The citizens of Iraq turned out in mass to exercise their newly acquired right to cast a vote.

My brother in law (currently deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom) is the DCO of the 43rd ASG. As a senior logistician in theatre, he was intimately involved with how that election was conducted. There were several instances where insurgents successfully detonated

bombs in an effort to disrupt and discredit the election process. He witnessed people seriously injured refuse medical attention until after they cast their ballot, in some cases this meant waiting until a new polling location could be established.

The right of self-determination, to be able to choose the elected members of your government, is the trademark of a free society. In Colorado Springs we see the other side of the coin, as some of our citizens exercise their right to not vote. This action however is a matter of choice, whereas the City Clerk made an arbitrary determination that over 80,000 citizen□s who were registered and eligible to cast a ballot, were deemed unworthy of the □Active□ voter designation, and essentially denied their right to vote or not vote.

You have identified the over 80,000 disenfranchised voters that were excluded from the city's election process. I say excluded because of the unique hoops these registered voters would be required to jump through in order to become certified as an □active□ voter by the City Clerk. This is one of the reasons that I voted against, and do not support the continued use of an □all mail in ballot□.

I also disagree strongly with the □cost savings□ rationale that has frequently been used by my colleagues to justify their votes in support of the all mail in process. I don't care if the cost of conducting our election exceeds the combined sum total of the City's General Fund and Enterprises annual budgets. I do not look upon the citizen□s right to vote as an opportunity to demonstrate fiscal conservatism. That over sight would be much more appropriately (and as yet unapplied to) demonstrated by allocating PSST funds to fire stations instead of office buildings.

Even though I won re-election, my confidence in the City Clerks process is low. The □Election Plan□ presented to the City Council was represented by the City Clerk as having been approved by Colorado's Secretary of State. This was an extremely liberal interpretation of Mike Coffman's opinion letter. The letter stated Colorado Springs' exercise of its home rule authority, created a Constitutional prohibition against rendering any opinion or expressing any of his reservations on the submitted election plan.

I hold little hope that City Council will end its practice of blindly deferring to the recommendations of city staff. The responsibility of setting policy and making substantive decisions rests on the shoulders of Council. By abrogating that obligation to staff, we commit a grievous disservice to our citizens and insulate our staff from any and all accountability for the action.

Thank you for confirming my opinion of how well we fail to fulfill our obligations to our constituency. Even for bobble heads we are pathetic, opting for spin and interpretation, instead of producing substantive results. Our current business model confers disproportionate benefit to upon a select few to the detriment of many. It also blurs the moral absolutes of right and wrong, for that I apologize.

I value your assessment of the election process and encourage you to continue to inform us of our shortcomings. It takes courage to point out that the emperor has no clothes; I apologize for the Councils inability to understand the message.

Tom Gallagher
Colorado Springs City Council at Large

Subject: RE: Mail ballot elections - the opposing viewpoint

Date: Wed, 6 Jun 2007 11:09:03 -0600

From: □Council Member Jerry Heimlicher□ <JHeimlicher@springsgov.com>

To: □Robert Balink□ <RobertBalink@elpasoco.com>, <ccorry@ejfi.org>

Seems like the economics are overpowering and it is time to take mail ballots to the next level. Why not stop trying to shoot them down and find a way to address each concern. All of the concerns about mail in ballots exist for absentee and early voters.

Subject: RE: Mail ballot elections - the opposing viewpoint

Date: Fri, 7 Jun 2007 20:00:17 -0600

To: □Council Member Jerry Heimlicher□ <JHeimlicher@springsgov.com>, □Robert Balink□ <RobertBalink@elpasoco.com>

From: □Dr. Charles E. Corry□ <ccorry@ejfi.org>

Mr. Heimlicher,

From your comment it appears your premise is that elections should be sold to the lowest bidder, in this case Diebold the most mistrusted name in elections.

It would also greatly help public confidence if Colorado Springs employed a city clerk who could do basic arithmetic. And since all the programming was done by Diebold, signatures were checked by Diebold, and counting was done by Diebold without oversight by poll watchers we have no idea if the count was accurate, precise, or repeatable. That is not conducive to public trust.

Apparently it doesn't penetrate when I say that **you can have an honest election, or you can have a mail ballot election, but you can't have both at the same time.** There are simply too many ways to game a mail ballot election to □address each concern□and far too much money and power at stake to assume there will not be election fraud.

You are correct that the same concerns exist for □no excuse□absentee ballots and early voting. So why not do away with the expense of early voting if economy is desired and return to only issuing absentee ballots to those who appear in person and present a valid reason they won't be here on Election Day? That would be much smarter than trying to make the unworkable work as is so frequently done with government programs like mail ballot elections.

At present, city council and the county commission, in league with the clerks, design a Cadillac election with polling places and expensive optical scanners and DREs at every precinct for handicapped voters who rarely use them, provisional ballots, □no excuse□absentee ballots, and two weeks of early voting, and then say it costs more than the Model T version of mail balloting. If, instead, one used the Chevrolet version of polling place elections, with absentee voting only on demand by personal appearance, then costs for the two election styles would likely be very similar but the integrity of our elections would be orders of magnitude greater.

Since the turnout in the April 2007 Colorado Springs mail ballot election dropped to 27% from the 37% turnout in the 2003 mail ballot election and the number of registered voters dropped by about 500 despite an increase in population of about 32,000 residents, efforts to increase voter turnout and participation by making it easier to vote would appear to be having the opposite effect.

Cost and convenience are not the underlying objectives for an election.

Charles E. Corry, Ph.D., F.G.S.A.

Subject: Re: EJF newsletter - You will vote the way we tell you to vote! Verstehen! 6/26/07

Date: Tue, 26 Jun 2007 13:16:53 -0600

From: □Robert Balink□ <RobertBalink@elpasoco.com>

To: <ccorry@ejfi.org>

Please remove this e-mail address from all non-essential communications and restrict use of this address to specific matters which directly relate to El Paso County, Colorado business.

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld

From: Dr. Charles E. Corry <ccorry@ejfi.org>

To: Robert Balink

Sent: Tue Jun 26 17:15:54 2007

Subject: Re: EJF newsletter - You will vote the way we tell you to vote! Verstehen! 6/26/07

Mr. Balink,

Obviously you missed the direct application this message has to El Paso County. I've shortened it up to the pertinent points in the hope that you might yet get the point.

May I also remind you that you are a public servant and not in a position to give me orders.

Charles E. Corry, Ph.D., F.G.S.A.

Subject: Re: EJF newsletter - You will vote the way we tell you to vote! Verstehen! 6/26/07

Date: Wed, 27 Jun 2007 08:18:43 -0600

From: □ Robert Balink □ <RobertBalink@elpasoco.com>

To: □ Dr. Charles E. Corry □ <ccorry@ejfi.org>

Mr. Corry,

Thank you for attending the Election Education & Research Task Force meetings.

Throughout the last four years we have sought to share with community leaders and citizens information about election laws (national and state), Secretary of State Rules and other critical information about election processes. Part of the effort, as you know, focused on an extensive analysis of the pros and cons of Mail Ballot Elections.

We have welcomed input from all participants. Perhaps, unfortunately, we have received comments that you were given more latitude and opportunity to express your views than most other members.

And today you choose, once again, to mischaracterize the efforts of our election department team by pushing your agenda with a very closed mind.

For you to now say □ little input was tolerated and none invited □ can only be characterized as disingenuous and, quite simply, false.

I will offer one specific topic here: MAIL BALLOT ELECTIONS

It is well-known that the BOCC has decided to conduct an MBE in November 2007, certainly their right under CRS in a Coordinated Election year.

And while you are clearly against MBEs (for many reasons) you steadfastly refuse to help ensure that we conduct a fair and accurate MBE this fall...since we are tasked with conducting one.

Charles, I work for all the citizens of El Paso County- not just you. I will, therefore, focus my energies and try to give more equal time many to the other several hundred thousand registered

voters who have not received scores of e-mail responses from me as you have had. You've had more than your fair share.

But, please keep in mind, I will warmly welcome additional constructive input from you, if and when you choose to submit it.

Your constant attacks on election systems and processes, however, may be more effective if directed to those in a position to make changes you suggest and that would include lawmakers at the national and state levels and the Colorado Secretary of State.

I sincerely hope they respond to any legitimate concerns you have.

Our office has done an exceptional job over the years to place El Paso County among the *best Election Departments in the State of Colorado*. Our office is currently heavily engaged in efforts to help Colorado and the Secretary of State comply with federal HAVA requirements with the SCORE II project, as further evidence of our commitment to the citizens we serve.

You asked me not to give you and any orders- and I haven't but I am politely asking you to be constructive and truthful with your input and not continue to tear down the tireless efforts work scores of competent national and state legislators and other elected officials and local election offices who have a much greater interest to ensure a fair and honest election process that every citizens deserves than you do. It is, after all, our sworn duty to do so.

Regards,

Bob

P.S. Please feel free to share this e-mail with your extensive contact list.

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld

To: Robert Balink <RobertBalink@elpasoco.com>

From: Dr. Charles E. Corry <ccorry@ejfi.org>

Subject: EJF newsletter - El Paso County Clerk in his own words

Mr. Balink, [El Paso County, Colorado, Clerk and Recorder]

As you have invited me to share these comments with the EJF mailing list I have done so as they are quite representative of the arrogance and ignorance citizens commonly face in attempting to deal with public officials. Some of our correspondents may wish to respond with additional comments of their own to you.

Inasmuch as you have put yourself forward as an expert on elections I think it appropriate to review your background so that citizens can make an independent judgement of your qualifications. To the best of my knowledge you have no training or education in logic; you have only the most rudimentary computer skills and no experience with programming or relational databases; you have a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics and an MBA but no training or work experience in science or engineering; prior to your unopposed election as county clerk you had never worked as an election official other than as an election judge; you have never held any other elective office; and you have never served in the military and put your life on the line in defense of the Constitution. As best I can determine you have not published any scholarly works and there are no references to your work in the Library of Congress or at Amazon.com, nor do you personally maintain a blog or web site.

The truly frightening thing, however, is that you are better educated and more experienced than all but a very tiny fraction of election officials. Such ignorance makes election officials easy targets for the snake oil salesmen employed by electronic voting machine companies.

Further, after just a couple of months on the job, your very capable election director has resigned in protest against the policies you defend below. In response to that resignation a local paper (www.csindy.com/csindy/2007-06-21/publiceye.html) publicly asks if an election calamity is next? As the EJF newsletter is widely distributed to citizens and elected officials I'll leave it to them to decide where the real problem lies after reading your comments.

I have taken the liberty of interjecting amongst yours a few responses of my own enclosed in square brackets [] and blue.

Charles E. Corry, Ph.D., F.G.S.A.

Mr. Corry,

Thank you for attending the Election Education & Research Task Force meetings. Throughout the last four years we have sought to share with community leaders and citizens information about election laws (national and state), Secretary of State Rules and other critical information about election processes. Part of the effort, as you know, focused on an extensive analysis if the pros and cons of Mail Ballot Elections.

We have welcomed input from all participants. Perhaps unfortunately we have received comments that you were given more latitude and opportunity to express your views than most other members.

[Arguing ad hominen, Mr. Balink makes it clear that only good Germans should be "given" an opportunity to ask a few, politically correct, questions. Obviously a citizen, no matter how educated, experienced, or distinguished, should dare question the imperial wisdom of the County Clerk.]

And today you choose, once again, to mischaracterized the efforts of our election department team by pushing your agenda with a very closed mind.

For you to now say "little input was tolerated and none invited" can only be characterized as disingenuous and, quite simply, false.

[I think Mr. Balink's preceding statement about complaints speaks for itself on this issue.]

I will offer one specific topic here: MAIL BALLOT ELECTIONS

It is well-known that the BOCC has decided to conduct an MBE in November 2007, certainly their right under CRS in a Coordinated Election year.

[It is well known that the El Paso County Commissioners prefer to spend money on viewing citizens naked rather than on elections. However, it was at Mr. Balink's urging that the commissioners adopted a mail ballot election in 2007. It seems obvious that if Mr. Balink had told the commission that it was impossible to run an honest election with mail ballots that the county commissioners would probably would not have insisted on an MBE.]

And while you are clearly against MBEs (for many reasons) you steadfastly refuse to help ensure that we conduct a fair and accurate MBE this fall...since we are tasked with conducting one.

[Apparently Mr. Balink doesn't speak with his election department. Six years ago, and many times since, I've suggested they use the postal service's National Change of Address (NCOA) database as a check against the voter registration database before mailing out ballots. I was recently informed they will finally start doing that. In addition I suggested a few months ago that the voter registration database be compared against the county assessor's database to see if the "voter's address" (1) existed, and (2) was a valid residential address in order to reduce vote fraud with mail ballots. That suggestion was enthusiastically received by Balink's election department but will likely die now that John Bass has resigned.]

Charles, I work for all the citizens of El Paso County- not just you. I will, therefore, focus my energies and try to give more equal time many to the other several hundred thousand registered voters who have not received scores of e-mail responses from me as you have had. You've had more than your fair share.

But, please keep in mind, I will warmly welcome additional constructive input from you, if and when you choose to submit it.

[It seems obvious Mr. Balink has not read any of the "constructive input" submitted so far and is quite unlikely to read any in the future. Election as county clerk has clearly granted him omniscience and I note that he has yet to document any of his claims or statements.]

Your constant attacks on election systems and processes, however, may be more effective if directed to those in a position to make changes you suggest: that would include lawmakers at the national and state levels and the Colorado Secretary of State.

I sincerely hope they respond to any illegitimate [sic] concerns you have.

[EJF newsletters go to people at virtually all levels of government. In particular, Colorado State Senator Dave Schultheis (R-El Paso) introduced a bill a few years ago to eliminate mail ballot elections. Rep. Alice Madden (D-Boulder) asked for our support a couple of years ago on a bill requiring VVPAT for DRE voting machines, and so on.]

Our office has done an exceptional job over the years to place El Paso County among the *best Election Departments in the State of Colorado*. Our office is currently heavily engaged in efforts to help Colorado and the Secretary of State comply with federal HAVA requirements with the SCORE II project, as further evidence of our commitment to the citizens we serve.

[Granted that Mr. Balink's election staff does an exceptional job compared with other county clerks in Colorado but I wouldn't say the competition is real stiff in this state. For example, see Doofus Too Dumb To Quit In Arapahoe County (www.ejfi.org/Voting/Voting-59.htm).

SCORE II is the second attempt to develop a statewide voter registration database. This statewide database was mandated by HAVA to be implemented by January 1, 2006. Currently it is being developed without any citizen input and appears to be stalled. My guess is we have another Accenture disaster in the making (www.ejfi.org/Voting/Voting-92.htm). As noted in the original newsletter, Colorado to date

has a zero percent success rate with implementing large databases.]

You asked me not to give you and any orders ☐ and I haven't ☐ but I am politely asking you to be constructive and truthful with your input and not continue to tear down the tireless efforts work scores of competent national and state legislators and other elected officials and local election offices who have a much greater interest to ensure a fair and honest election process that every citizens deserves than you do. It is, after all, our sworn duty to do so.

[In my experience "input" is only deemed "constructive" by government officials if you are telling them what they want to hear. What Mr. Balink wants to hear is how great mail ballot elections are. But there is clear evidence that one cannot hold an honest election using mail ballots. And elected officials have a tendency to act like spoiled children when told they can't do something.

As Mr. Balink clearly doesn't understand logic I suppose I'll have to forgive the inference that I've been lying. However, should that be repeated it would be insulting.

I take exception with regard to the "tireless efforts work scores of competent national and state legislators and other elected officials and local election offices who have a much greater interest to ensure a fair and honest election process that every citizens deserves" than I do. I have documented but a few of the peccadilloes in Trust Our Election Officials? (www.ejfi.org/Voting/Voting-51.htm) From the examples given in the original newsletter far too many government officials involved in elections have been convicted of high crimes or skipped town. Where money and elected offices are involved "sworn duty" seems to be of negligible value in deciding where to place the public trust and "many eyes" of citizen election judges has historically proven much more reliable.]

Regards,
Bob

P.S. Please feel free to share this e-mail with your extensive contact list.

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld
