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From: Senator Kathy Bernier
To: The Senate Committee on Elections, Election Process Reform and Ethics
Re: Testimony on Senate Bill 268
Relating to: compensation of election officials performing duties during a recount.
Date: May 19, 2021

Thank you committee members for allowing me to provide testimony on Senate Bills 268. I appreciate the opportunity to work with Rep. Horlacher on this simple and responsible legislation.

Following the 2016 Presidential Election a statewide recount was conducted at the final cost of \$2,005,603. Four years later, a recount of just two counties cost \$2,455,147. Understandably, COVID-19 had an impact on this figure. However, the amount paid to temporary staff in one county alone more than doubled, from \$102,000 to \$243,000. While these two recounts were paid for by the campaigns requesting them, the next one might be on the taxpayer's tab. That is why we authored this legislation requiring poll workers to be paid at the same rate for a recount as they were for the election under review.

This should not cause undue difficulty as poll workers have historically been just as willing to work on a recount as they are to work on an election. Increased staffing costs for recounts should not be used to gouge those paying for a recount, especially when a recount is at taxpayer expense.

I ask you to please support the passage of Senate Bill 268. Thank you again for allowing me to provide testimony today.



CODY HORLACHER

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May 19th, 2021

Chairperson Bernier and Senate Elections, Election Process Reform and Ethics Committee Members,

Thank you for holding a Public Hearing on SB 268 related to compensation of election officials performing duties during a recount.

Increased staffing costs for recounts should not be used to gouge those paying for a recount, especially when a recount is at taxpayer expense.

Following the 2016 Presidential Election a statewide recount was conducted at the final cost of \$2,005,603. Four years later, a recount of just two counties cost \$2,455,147. Understandably, COVID-19 had an impact on this figure. However, the amount paid to temporary staff in one county alone more than doubled, from \$102,000 to \$243,000. While these two recounts were paid for by the campaigns requesting them, the next one might be on the taxpayer's tab. That is why we are introducing legislation requiring poll workers to be paid at the same rate for a recount as they were for the election under review.

This should not cause undue difficulty as poll workers have historically been just as willing to work on a recount as they are to work on an election. This legislation only addresses pay rates for election workers and would not impact other costs associated with recounts.

This bill clarifies that the payments to election workers should remain the same for the general election as well as the recount.

I appreciate your consideration of this bill and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.