



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE OF DELEGATES

RICHMOND

R. STEVEN (STEVE) LANDES

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TWENTY-FIFTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
EDUCATION (CHAIRMAN)
APPROPRIATIONS (VICE CHAIRMAN)
PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS
RULES

August 29, 2016

Mr. Edgardo Cortés, Commissioner
Washington Bldg., 1100 Bank Street, 1st Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Commissioner Cortés:

I am requesting that this letter concerning cameras in the polling places be read at the August 29, 2016, State Board of Elections (SBE) meeting.

It has been brought to my attention that despite testimony presented at the June 28, 2016, SBE meeting, the board proposed a regulation allowing the use of cameras in polling places. I was told that all General Registrars and Electoral Board Members that spoke that day spoke in opposition to the proposed regulation.

A regulation allowing cameras in the polling place, other than under law already providing provision and rules for media use of cameras in VA Code 24.2-604, Section J, allows the possibility of being in direct conflict with VA Code 24.2-604, Section D, which addresses impeding or hindering voters and delaying the orderly conduct of an election. Stopping to take a satisfactory picture of a citizen in the act of voting can certainly cause delay, especially in a Presidential election with long lines, and may intimidate other voters.

There is no good purpose served by allowing voters to take pictures of themselves in the act of voting or with their actual ballot. What prevents them from trying to take pictures of others in the act of voting? If this new regulation is merely for political purposes, then clearly this impedes the right for every citizen to feel safe and free to elect candidates of their choice with no jeopardy to their right of a secret ballot as guaranteed in VA Code 24.02-607, Section A.

It is my hope that the State Board of Elections takes this matter more seriously and rescinds the proposal related to this issue. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Landes".

R. Steven Landes

RSL/jww