



**Statement of Douglas County Election Commissioner, Brian W. Kruse  
United States Senate Rules Committee  
March 12, 2024**

Chairwoman Klobuchar and ranking member Fischer, I appreciate the invitation to speak before the committee this afternoon. My name is Brian W. Kruse and I am the Douglas County Election Commissioner in Omaha, Nebraska. I am here to discuss how we are preparing for the upcoming 2024 Presidential Election and what makes Nebraska a gold standard for election administration.

One of the most important aspects of election administration is trust and fairness in conducting and managing elections. In Nebraska, we have, as I mentioned, the gold standard for election administration. First and foremost we use paper ballots. Voters receive a paper ballot whether it be for early voting or Election Day voting. The tabulating machines that count ballots, are never connected to the internet or to each other, and these machines are used only after numerous pre-election tests. Following the election and before results are official a thorough canvass or audit process is conducted as well as a manual audit directed by the Nebraska Secretary of State's office. There is a paper trail.

Our office prepares for each election cycle by reviewing and updating procedures for each department to ensure that each voter registration, candidate filing, early voting request, ballot, or petition signature is processed according to the statutes and using consistent rules. When processing thousands of records and training seasonal staff, it's important to ensure the correct procedures are being followed.

Early voting by mail can be a secure and accurate method of voting if administered properly. For polling place elections, Nebraska law requires voters who choose to vote by-mail to request an early voting or absentee ballot prior to each election as ballots cannot be automatically sent. Signatures and now voter ID requirements are checked at the time each request is processed. If these requirements are not met, a ballot will not be sent. Upon ballots being returned, signatures are checked again.

Drop boxes in Douglas County are secure, under 24/7 surveillance cameras, and emptied each week day by two individuals of differing parties. I encourage voters to use one of our thirteen drop boxes as they are the most direct way to return election mail. The voter places the item in the box and election workers pick them up, there are no third parties involved. Voters in Douglas County across all political spectrums have embraced the drop boxes. On average 77%, of all by-mail ballots are returned via the drop boxes.

Bolstering public confidence in our elections is vital to successful elections. Local election officials are the trusted source for getting the message out about elections. I am fortunate and grateful that I have a good relationship with the local media - TV, radio and print as they assist my office in disseminating accurate and timely information. The big task this cycle for Nebraska is the implementation of Voter ID and making sure voters know what is needed both for by mail early voting and Election Day voting in order for their ballot to be accepted and their voices heard.

The media is also a vital partner in reminding voters of deadlines and other helpful guides to make the process successful, for instance working with our office to create an infographic or flowchart of Voter ID options. The Chief Deputy Election Commissioner and myself attend as many community events as possible to provide election education, answer questions, and build relationships. These relationships have forged trust and have been instrumental for my office in correctly informing voters of changes related to elections.

In Nebraska, we also are unique in the fact that we have a state law, the only state, which allows for poll workers to be drafted, similar to jury duty. Douglas County was the only county in Nebraska that conducted a draft for many years. Some advantages to drafting poll workers are increased community awareness of the election process, less difficulty in securing election workers, and a younger work force with an average age in the mid-50's while the majority of poll workers nationwide are over 60.

In conclusion, it is my privilege to serve the voters of Douglas County and an honor to be here representing the 93 county election officials in Nebraska who work diligently to conduct accurate elections. I encourage all citizens from coast to coast to go and have your voices heard on Election Day.

Thank You for inviting me today Senator Fischer and thank you to the committee for your time this afternoon.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian W. Kruse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Brian W. Kruse  
Douglas County Election Commissioner