

## Chris Taggart

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**From:** kathy scarfo <klscarfo527@outlook.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 25, 2020 8:04 PM  
**To:** Ravalli County Commissioners Office  
**Cc:** contactdoj@mt.gov  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Mail-in Voting

I wish to express to you in the strongest terms my extreme concern regarding the use of mail-in voting for this upcoming and any future presidential elections. Last week, I visited the Ravalli county voting office to change the method of casting my vote to absentee ballot. I had originally intended to visit a polling location in Stevensville where I reside, however, to my dismay I had heard that there would not be a voting location in Stevensville.

While at the county voting office, I had the opportunity to meet with the Ravalli County Elections Administrator, Regina Plettenberg - she confirmed that she had recommended to you that HER preference for casting votes in this years presidential election was mail-in ballots. While I very much appreciated her speaking with me, I was not convinced that mail-in voting was the best alternative. I believe that her explanation would be considered inadequate by any reasonable person making a decision on behalf of voters represented but not included in the decision process.

She claimed that due to Covid she had lost more than 1/3 of her volunteers - apparently most were elderly and did not want to participate. Considering the number of unemployed in Montana as well as those who are retired, I believe she may have been able to find 40 volunteers willing to participate in this most important election. She further stated that even if she had been able to find the volunteers, she probably would not have had the time to train them as judges. I am not sure what training is required, but I have been to a number of polling stations during my lifetime and they appeared to be staffed by local average citizens from all walks of life. She also stated as justification for her recommendation to you, that she was unable to identify a polling location in Stevensville, since the local high school was undergoing renovation. This renovation has been in progress for months - certainly adequate time to locate an alternative site.

In closing let me say that to Ms. Plettenberg's credit, she did not use Covid as a reason for her recommendation, maybe that is because she is planning one large polling station in Hamilton. I am a retired military veteran and have had to vote by absentee ballot on several occasions - although absentee balloting may seem the same as mail-in voting, it is not. I first requested an absentee ballot, identifying myself as a registered voter, and after verification, was mailed an absentee ballot. This process ensured to the greatest extent possible that mine was a truly valid vote.

Finally, I have only lived in Montana for one year and I am not sure if you offer early voting at the polling stations, however, it was a common practice in Texas, my last residence. Early voting allowed registered voters to go to designated polling stations to cast their ballots. These were open for approximately four days about two weeks before actual voting day. This process greatly reduced congestion at the polling sights on voting day.

I honestly believe that all the conversation regarding the United States Postal Service is smoke and mirrors - they do not make the ballots, they simply deliver to an address - then collect and distribute these when the ballots are returned. There are many examples of mistakes, abuse, and out right fraud surrounding the use of

the mail-in voting process. Therefore, my real concern is how, and as well as who, verifies the authenticity of the returned ballot. Needless to say I am adamantly opposed to wholesale mail-in voting. I thank you for your time.

John and Kathy Scarfo

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