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Let me start by saying I am against Mail Ballot Only elections. I believe they provide many more opportunities for fraud, error and coercion on many levels. That being said, I am also adamant for FAIR elections.

Our current Governor, who is also running for a US Senate seat, has completely abused his powers during this COVID panic. For example, he received \$1.2 Billion to IMMEDIATELY help Montanans back in March. As of an article from July 23<sup>rd</sup>, he had spent just over 10% of it, saving the bulk of it, I'm sure, to use in the month or two prior to this fall election. On August 6<sup>th</sup>, he also unilaterally decided that all counties could decide whether they want traditional elections or mail only. This again was an abusive stroke of genius and gameplay by the Governor. He is really warping the law (or rather ignoring it) as spelled out in Montana Code Annotated Title 13, Chapter 19, Part 104. Even if he wasn't running for office, this would be a great breach of law and public trust, but the fact he is a candidate in one of the most important elections in the country makes this one of the biggest conflicts of interest I've seen.

There may be a lawsuit to reverse this order, however, if a lawsuit does not prevail, Ravalli County MUST have mail out ballots only.

Why do we need to allow this? Let me explain.

In the 2016 presidential primary, Ravalli County had 48% of registered voters vote. Missoula had 44%. In the 2020 presidential primary, because of mail out only ballots, Ravalli had 58% and Missoula had 53%. This is an increase of more than 20%. If these numbers are projected into the general, Missoula County will have approximately 14000 more voters and Ravalli County will increase by approximately 5000. Missoula votes 59% democrat. Ravalli votes 70% Republican. That means almost 7000 more votes for Democrats in Missoula. If Ravalli does mail in only, that should increase Republican votes by over 3000.

The evil genius of the Governor's order to "allow" counties to make up their own minds about the mail only ballots is that he knows conservative counties like Ravalli will choose traditional elections while liberal counties like Missoula will do mail only. This creates a completely unfair election warped toward the Democrats.

That is why I will continue to fight for a traditional election, while also be asking you to join me in supporting our Republican Commissioners and Clerk and Recorder in Mail Only ballots as long as the Governor's edict is in place.

Terry Nelson

