



MONTANA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SENATOR MARK BLASDEL
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
REPRESENTATIVE E. WYLIE GALT
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

To: All Republican Legislators
From: President Blasdel and Speaker Galt
Re: Call of a Special Session

February 15, 2022

Honorable Members of the 67th Legislature,

We write this letter in response to the draft letter dated February 14, 2022 that is currently being circulated for signature collection and is addressed to Governor Greg Gianforte requesting that he call a special session.

The 2/14/2022 letter requests a special session to deal with three topics: PSC maps, the creation and funding of a special select committee on election integrity, and any statutory requirements when the Legislature is in session.

We and the Governor (in his own letter today that has been shared with you) all agree on calling a special session to address PSC maps and any necessary statutory requirements, so this letter focuses on the remaining item: a special select committee to investigate election integrity.

We are proud of the great work done on securing Montana's elections in the 2021 session, which we accomplished together working as a unified caucus. After years of obstruction from Democratic governors, we successfully put in place numerous reforms to improve the integrity of Montana's elections, including:

- SB 169 creating a strong Voter ID law
- HB 176 ending same-day voter registration
- SB 170 cleaning up Montana's voter rolls annually
- SB 93 allowing more poll watching
- HB 530 requiring the Secretary of State to adopt rules governing election security
- HB 651 creating more oversight on ballot initiatives

Regarding the creation of a special select committee to investigate election integrity, we continue to seek answers to the following questions from those proposing such a committee:

1. How much funding would the committee need? We've heard different price tags ranging from \$50,000 to \$500,000 according to different legislators.
2. What, specifically, will the funding go toward?
3. What investigative powers would the committee need that is not already provided in existing law and through existing committees?



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4. What are the scope and goals of the proposed committee? What specifically will it be investigating and what does it seek to achieve? Are there specific policy proposals that will be brought forward to the committee?
 - a. We have received emails from concerned citizens regarding the scope of the proposed committee's work. Suggested items have included the following: a full forensic audit, complete hand count of all ballots in all counties from the 2020 election, and the elimination of vote counting machines going with entirely hand counts instead. Are any or all of these proposals being brought forward?
5. Do the votes exist to establish and fund the committee according to the answers to the above questions?

As you know, special sessions are very brief and require a lot of coordination to be successful. We believe having firm and agreed-upon answers to the above questions would be necessary to have a productive special session. Legislators should have a clear and full understanding of the special select committee proposal prior to being expected to sign onto a letter calling for a special session addressing that topic. As we all agree that being responsible stewards of taxpayer money is of the utmost importance, it's also important for legislators to have a full understanding of the financial aspect of the proposal.

Again, we continue to seek firm and agreed-upon answers to the questions contained in this letter.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Mark Blasdel in black ink.

President of the Senate

Handwritten signature of E. Wylie Galt in black ink.

Speaker of the House