

PROPOSAL TO FORM A BI-PARTISAN COMMISSION TO EVALUATE CURRENT ARIZONA ELECTIONS LAWS AND PROCEDURES AND PROPOSE REFORMS

When it comes to Elections in the State of Arizona, at a minimum, we have a perception problem. Regardless of the technical and legal issues involved, any election that relies on weeks of counting to determine the results leads to an undermining of faith in the results. We are a representative form of government because of our elections. We must correct any technical and legal issues that are causing the extended period of tabulation in order to restore the fundamental faith in our election systems.

Any commission should establish some basic ground rules to operate. Suggested guidelines:

1. Adhere to the constitutional principles of Checks and Balances and Separation of Powers inherent in the US and Arizona Constitutions. This includes the differentiation between the state powers and the powers of the various county officials as well.
2. Clarify any inconsistencies in existing law that prevent item 1 from being followed.
3. Clarify laws and procedures to ensure uniformity between all counties in how they are applied.
4. Clarify all laws and procedures that do not conform to federal law to bring Arizona in to compliance.
5. Provide finality to elections. Our system of representative government requires finality in order to allow for governance by any elected officer.
6. Provide maximum amount of transparency of the process.

The Governor and the incoming Secretary of State should appoint co-chairs of the commission and a maximum of 2 additional members. Provide a timeframe (suggested 8 weeks) in which to present recommendations that adhere to the above principles. Ask that Maricopa and Pima County election officials appoint one member each to sit on the commission. Ask that 3 of the remaining 13 counties appoint one member each to represent the smaller county concerns. Ask that a member of the majority and minority leaders of each house of the legislature appoint a member to represent each. Appoint a small staff to assist in the logistics and to answer legal questions associated with this process. The members of the commission should represent a broad cross section of interested parties from across the state.

Respectfully,

Bill Beard