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PIMA COUNTY RECENTLY SECURED A SMALL GRANT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY TO UPDATE ELECTION SECURITY. CAN YOU DISCUSS HOW THE COUNTY PLANS TO IMPLEMENT THE FUNDS AND WHAT THEY'LL ACCOMPLISH?

The County received a \$54,168 Department of Homeland Security grant for outdoor security cameras at the Elections Department site where election ballots are processed, and at the recorder's office where early-voting ballots are processed. The funds also will pay for security bars on two floor-to-ceiling windows that face the recorder's office parking lot. These additions will improve the ability of staff members and sheriff's deputies to monitor persons coming and going, and will provide the recorder's office with greater direct security.

OTHER COMMUNITIES MIGHT NOT NECESSARILY BE AWARE OF THE AVAILABLE FUNDS TO HELP BOOST ELECTION SECURITY AND PREPARE LOCALLY FOR ELECTIONS. HOW WAS PIMA COUNTY MADE AWARE OF THIS GRANT PROGRAM, AND HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT PURSUING IT?

The Arizona Department of Homeland Security made us aware of this grant program in late 2022. We assembled elections, recorder's office, and safety and security officials under county administration direction to determine what our greatest needs were under the grant criteria and to develop the successful grant proposal. Due to some of the reports of angry crowds at sites where ballots were present, Pima County

wanted to be sure to first, protect our employees, and second, deter any similar acts that could shake the faith in our democracy.

ARE THERE ANY POLICIES OR INITIATIVES AT THE LOCAL, STATE, AND/OR FEDERAL LEVEL YOU'D LIKE TO SEE IMPLEMENTED TO STRENGTHEN AND PROTECT DEMOCRACY?

At the federal level, we would like to see the Voting Rights Act restored to its original vigor and even strengthened. At the state level, we need to roll back the many laws of recent years that make registering to vote, voting, and getting citizen initiatives on ballots more difficult. At the local level, we have done all within our authority to make voting secure, but easier – including mail-in ballots, early voting sites, and well-placed voting centers at which any county-registered voter can cast a ballot.

We intend to maintain these measures and move within legal restraints to make voting easier and the election process more secure and more voter-friendly. Deliberate and coordinated efforts to share misinformation designed to create distrust in our elections needed to be countered with targeted and coordinated data and reality. This messaging needs to take language, culture, and age into account to tailor messaging in different communities. Considering our different communities helps to decide what medium to use and when (social media, op-eds, news stories, online ads, radio, etc.).

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE UNDER PRESSURE HEADING INTO THE 2024 ELECTION CYCLE, AND ELECTED OFFICIALS LIKE YOURSELF HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE DEMOCRACY CHAMPIONS. ARE THERE WAYS THAT YOU SHOW SUPPORT FOR ELECTION ADMINISTRATORS, HELP BOLSTER ELECTION SECURITY, COUNTER DISINFORMATION, OR WORK TO IMPROVE VOTING RIGHTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

We will continue to fund fully the voting equipment and personnel needs of the county elections department and the county recorder's office to ensure our elections processes are secure, accurate, and user-friendly. Elected and administration officials and the Pima County communications office will endeavor to dispel election disinformation with factual assurances about the conduct of our elections. We will lobby the legislature to repeal laws that discourage voting and to enact measures that improve the processes and make voting easier. I commit to being a vocal proponent of voting rights and amplify, however I can, the messaging from national, state, and local government that dispels inaccurate and sometimes destructive misinformation with accurate information, in English, Spanish, and other languages.

