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CAN YOU DISCUSS SOME OF THE WAYS YOUR COUNTY HAS PREPARED FOR THE UPCOMING ELECTION, AND ENSURING ELECTION WORKERS AND ELECTION INTEGRITY ARE PROTECTED?

There are a disturbing number of claims right now that greater accessibility to voting threatens the integrity of our voting process. Colorado broadly has what many call the gold standard in election accessibility and integrity. Our Eagle County Clerk, Regina O'Brien, has been inviting skeptics in to see the process, ask questions, and even be paid, trained election judges! The best cure for this terrifying and nonsensical effort to cast doubt on our most fundamental democratic institution will be for the dedicated (and elected!) people who run it to be as welcoming, transparent, and compassionate as possible.

IS YOUR COUNTY FACING ANY CHALLENGES THIS ELECTION SEASON – SUCH AS ATTEMPTS TO UNDERMINE THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, THREATS TO ELECTION WORKERS – AND HOW IS YOUR COMMUNITY DEALING WITH THEM?

The local Republican party sent a message out to unaffiliated and Republican voters to encourage them to vote in person only and on election day, rather than early or by mail. To quote the message, "We have to overwhelm the system." To have an individual make a statement so blatantly antagonistic to our democratic voting process is scandalous, at best. To have a partisan institution do so borders on insurrection. The only way for this to end well is for leaders within those and similar institutions to publicly disavow such words and actions. Those of us trying to protect this institution and its processes can only defend it with honesty, transparency, and security (for the system and those who run it).

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE FACING CHALLENGES LIKE THESE. DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR WHAT LOCAL OFFICIALS CAN DO TO COMBAT ELECTION DISINFORMATION, AND RESTORE FAITH IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS?

We are fortunate in Eagle County that these voices and opinions seem to be fringe. So perhaps my advice will ring hollow to those in truly contentious communities. But be honest, transparent, and patient. Some folks are genuinely curious to understand whether what they've heard is true. They are fairly easily satisfied when they learn how our Colorado system functions and how secure it is. Others will never be satisfied, but we must treat them both the same way in order to be satisfied with ourselves in the end. And treat your election staff and workers like the heroes they are right now. What they are going through is deeply frustrating and unfair. And yet they persist!

ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO ADD ON THIS TOPIC:

These voices were once fringe and rare. They are now legion and growing still. Because voices before them have destroyed faith in our public servants, leaders, and institutions, we cannot expect to win these skeptics over with truth. We need conservative and Republican leaders to stand up, speak out, and lead those who may still listen to them. We have seen what has happened to those who have tried, so it becomes more difficult and dangerous every day to do so. But the need as well grows greater every day. I hope the morning of November 9 shows this concern to be overblown. But if it is not, it may well be too late.

