



Jon Husted Ohio Secretary of State

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August 13, 2012

Mr. Ron Rothenbuhler, Chairman
The Honorable Keila Cosme
Mr. Anthony DeGidio
Mr. Jon Stainbrook
Lucas County Board of Elections
One Government Center, Suite 300
Toledo, Ohio 43604

Chairman Rothenbuhler, Judge Cosme, and Messrs. DeGidio and Stainbrook:

On July 25, 2012, I instructed you to work together to produce a bipartisan organizational chart and position descriptions by August 9. As of this writing, and with the presidential election looming, you have failed in this most fundamental task of local elections administration. This is the latest such failure in a long line of previous opportunities to fulfill your responsibilities.

Since becoming Secretary of State, my office has devoted an inordinate amount of time to mediating the personal and political squabbles of the Lucas County Board of Elections. For good or for ill, state law gives to the two major political parties of Ohio's counties the task of overseeing local elections administration. In most counties, this works well enough, either as a result of hardworking people of good will or by détente. In Lucas County, the internal board culture is dysfunctional. The underlying operational culture is divisive and threatening. Board members and staff refuse to communicate with others resulting in meetings and conversations that dissolve into worse than stalemate. It is clear after several attempts to work constructively with all parties, including my most recent request for cooperation; this board is unable to meet the minimum operational standards we expect as we prepare for a presidential election.

The voters of Ohio, Lucas County, and I as Secretary of State, will tolerate this dysfunction no longer.

As a result, I am placing the Lucas County Board of Elections on administrative oversight. The terms of this oversight are as follows:

1. I will be assigning outside election administration professionals, one of each party, as "Special Masters" to oversee the day to day operations of the Board of Elections. The current Director and Deputy Director will maintain their titles but will be relieved of all duties previously assigned. They, as all employees, will work at the sole direction and discretion of the Special Masters with only those duties prescribed by the Special Masters, until further notice.

2. Until further notice, the Director and Deputy Director must daily “clock-in” and “clock-out” by calling my Human Resources Director Gretchen Green at a phone number to be provided under separate cover. I have authorized Director Green to randomly and periodically check-in with the Director and Deputy Director regarding their time and attendance.
3. Until further notice, all emails sent by or to the Director and/or Deputy Director must be automatically forwarded by rule to a Secretary of State domain email account to be provided under separate cover.
4. Danielle Sellars, my office’s regional election IT support liaison, will be onsite at least two days a week to assist with IT matters.
5. The Lucas County Board of Elections will contract with Dominion Elections Services for onsite and escalated phone support for GEMS. My office will negotiate with Dominion to reduce fees for any services outside Lucas County’s existing contracts.
6. Finally, I am appointing bipartisan election administration consultants who will, by December 31, 2012, deliver a report to me, and the voters of Lucas County, detailing their findings for policies, procedures, and other recommendations, including long term organizational and personnel solutions. They will not look to assign blame, but will instead point the way forward.

Should any of you choose to resign, I will work with the former member’s respective political party to find a suitable, community-minded, public servant to appoint to the balance of your term.

I am **loathe** to take this action: it comes only after having given you, and your cohorts, every possible opportunity and assistance – through two state elections – to provide local solutions to local problems. With the General Election less than 90 days away and voting to start for military and overseas voters in less than 45 days, immediate measures must be taken to provide a reasonable level of assurance that the election in Lucas County will be administered in a **professional** manner.

Regretfully,



Jon Husted

cc: Meghan Gallagher, Director
Dan DeAngelis, Deputy Director