

# YES, COUNTY CLERKS DO MAKE HOUSE CAMPUS CALLS



Michigan's HAVA rules absolutely suck for college students. They require that first time voters vote in person. This leaves college students who live away from home two options: either re-register at their college address (and change their driver's license, since both addresses must match) or drive across the state to vote at home. Each year, the Democrats in Washtenaw County try to re-register thousands of students at University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University. Nevertheless, every year I've worked the polls I've seen a would-be first-time voter crushed when she discovered she couldn't vote at her local precinct, and didn't have the time (or the car) to drive home to cast a vote where she was registered.

This year, MI's county clerks are trying to make it easier for students to apply for absentee ballots by allowing them to go to the Secretary of State office (basically the DMV office) near their college, show ID, and apply for an absentee ballot in person. In other words, a student at UM would go to our Secretary of State's office, show ID, and get an absentee ballot sent from the clerk in Traverse City.

Only MI's crappy AG and gubernatorial wannabe, Mike Cox, wants to prevent the clerks offices from doing this.

So, as a way to dramatize the plight of college students and to pressure Cox not to formally rule against this practice, Macomb County Clerk Carmella Sabaugh (who was the Democratic nominee to be Secretary of State in 2006) is driving to western Michigan today to drive three students registered in her county to the local Secretary of State Office so they can show ID and apply

for an absentee ballot.

Macomb County Clerk / Register of Deeds Carmella Sabaugh (D-Warren) will drive 170 miles this afternoon to make sure Krysta Kornack of Warren and Jeanne and Katie Oxendine of Sterling Heights will not be prevented from voting. Kornack, a student at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, registered to vote on campus, and applied for an absent voter ballot. But her request was denied by her local clerk in accordance with Michigan law because she did not show a photo ID when she registered to vote. Kornack then went to the Ottawa County Clerk, the nearest county clerk office, showed photo ID, received an "In Person ID Verification" and applied again for an absent voter ballot.

But Kornack's second request for an absent voter ballot was put at risk last week when the Michigan Senate Majority Leader asked the Attorney General to stop first-time voters, whose photo IDs were verified by county clerks, from getting absent voter ballots.

Jeanne and Katie Oxendine attend Hope College and want to cast an absent voter ballot because they will not be able to return home to vote. Jeanne registered to vote by mail, but showed her photo ID at the Ottawa County Clerk's office. Katie registered to vote in person at a Secretary of State office.

The Attorney General issued an "informational letter" arguing the photo ID verifications performed by county clerks are invalid. The letter puts him at odds with the Michigan Secretary of State and 65 of the state's 83 county clerks. The large group of bipartisan county clerks started a cross

deputization program to verify photo IDs of first-time voters. The program applies equally across the state because any county clerk could participate at no cost.

“Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land deserves credit for standing up to the Attorney General, and Ottawa County Clerk Daniel Krueger deserves credit for leading the county clerk effort,” said Sabaugh. “The Attorney General should not be making it harder for decent citizens to vote.”

“Geography should not impair the right to vote,” said Daniel Krueger, Ottawa County Clerk (R-Holland Twp.) “My hope is that the Attorney General will understand the desire young people have to participate in the greatest process our country has and allow our cross deputization process to be an incentive to voters by allowing our photo ID verification process to continue.”

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Sabaugh agrees with Saginaw County Clerk Sue Kaltenbach who said, “Unless we’re told to actually cease and desist, we’ll continue.”

Sabaugh and Krueger will meet Kornack at the Grand Valley State University Kirkhof Center at 3:30 pm this afternoon. They will then meet the Oxendine’s at Hope College DeWitt Center a little after 4 pm, and drive the students to the nearest Secretary of State branch office in Holland where the students will show a photo ID to further satisfy the “in person” and photo ID requirements. (The nearest Secretary of State office to the Grand Valley Allendale campus is eight miles away.)

Sabaugh hopes her trip will focus public attention on this issue and help

convince the Attorney General not to issue a formal opinion. “Until the Michigan Attorney General says he won’t invalidate the photo ID verifications of students, first-time student voters who want an absent voter ballot should show a photo ID at a Secretary of State office,” said Sabaugh.

This is a superb stunt for several reasons: Sabaugh has some prominence from her state-wide race in 2006. She serves a largely Republican County and—since Hope College is a pretty conservative Christian school—she’s probably helping at least two Republicans vote.

And most of all, with the length of her drive, she’s illustrating the lengths to which Cox is trying to force college students to go if they want to vote.