

Thursday was a terrible day for democracy in the US and South Carolina. The Supreme Court, in its ruling in the case Louisiana vs Callais, paved the way to allow states to draw voting maps that will ensure that minority groups and other people of color will go unrepresented in the governments that are supposed to serve them. It guts the Voting Rights Act that was so hard fought for. This is not democracy.

At the same time, our South Carolina Attorney General, who just happens to be running for Governor, recklessly entered into a memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Justice that is working for the interests of MAGA and not the American People, to share our voter data. Whilst I have faith that the Election Commission will, as it states, not violate SC privacy and identity rules, the major concern is that we as South Carolinians have no idea what that data will be used for. Where is transparency? South Carolinians deserve to know exactly what was shared, under what authority, and what safeguards exist to prevent misuse. Unlike many other states, The South Carolina Secretary of State is not responsible for running elections. Since 1969, those elections have been run by a non-partisan elections commission. And I think that is how it should be. However, this commission is following the instructions of the AG to provide these data. When I'm elected Secretary of State, I will insist on clear rules, strict privacy protections, and full accountability anytime voter data is transferred to any outside agency - state or federal.

There is a bland statement on the Elections Commission website about allowing the Federal government to review our voter data to ensure ineligible voters cannot vote. However, we have no idea how that review will be carried out, what criteria will be used, or what level of accuracy will come out of any review. Will people who are fully eligible to vote suddenly find themselves unregistered and disenfranchised? What is the SC Elections Commission going to do to ensure this does not happen? How chilling is this going to be if people are afraid to register to vote?

Both of these events are a tragedy and I don't think history will look kindly upon the actors in this moment who are attempting to destroy our democracy. However, in the present moment it means that we must fight even harder. In the end, the will of the people will prevail. But that means we must vote like our lives depend on it because they do. This is not a time to stay home. This is not a time to stay on the sidelines. This is a time to support those who have stepped up and help credible democratic candidates into office. As South Carolina Secretary of State I will fight to my last breath to ensure that every person in South Carolina is represented in government by elected officials who will fight for the interests of the people.

But to do that I need your support. The candidates running in these elections need money and volunteer time to be able to run successful campaigns. Please think about

donating to the campaign, volunteering time for phone banking and canvassing. If the time is not right now, then when is it? The choice is ours.

- Edwina Winter, Candidate for SC Secretary of State