

Katherine J. Knight  
P. O. Box 783  
Hillsborough, North Carolina 27278  
wknight@centurylink.net

March 2014

Joshua B. Howard, Chairman  
North Carolina State Board of Elections  
441 North Harrington Street  
Raleigh, North Carolina 276034

RE: Orange County Early Voting Plan

The five recommended sites provided voting access to all citizens of Orange County. They do not cater to any group or political party.

All five (5) sites were by unanimous agreement. Mr. Cox implies that the five (5) sites were simply approved by the majority when all were approved with the exception to adding a sixth site (Cobb).

Mr. Cox implies the decision to move from Rams Head was a majority power play when in truth the entire board agreed that Rams Head created many problems;

1. Curbside voting
2. Handicap voting
3. Community voting
4. Voting site had to be closed due to UNC conflict
5. A student spoke to board against site due to student confusion reports

For these and other concerns the chairman of the Orange county Democratic party recommended Hillel. In addition to Chairman Hughes recommendation we solicited recommendations from UNC and the Town of Chapel Hill. Most input and recommendations were serious and based on serving the needs of the community. A few were silly and self serving, such as concerns for students

having to walk up a hill to vote.

Mr. Cox concern that Hillel will not be adequate is hard to understand as there was not one complaint about Rams Head not being able to handle the volume of voters and that was during a presidential election year with very good turn-out.

Mr. Cox's primary concern is the distance from student housing while in fact the voting site is approximately ½ mile from the additional site he wants to add. The students have no difficulty in reaching the Carolina Inn, Granville Towers or Top of The Hill Restaurant. In fact, Mr. Cox primary concern is, it is not on campus.

Mr. Cox concern over the inability to handle the volume due to a compressed early voting window has no basis as we will be open more hours than previous elections and more than mandated by law.

Mr. Cox justification for an additional site is to provide on campus options much closer to student housing to relieve non-existent pressure on Hillel during early voting. The site would be on transit lines which is true of both sites and is supported by the University which is true of both sites.

Mr. Cox agrees Cobb is certainly not perfect;

1. Citizens with disabilities must enter from opposite side of building
2. Curbside will present a major problem
3. The University has stated Cobb may or may not be available in the future due to constantly changing needs of the university which eliminates the continuity argument.

Mr. Cox strongest argument for adding an additional voting site is the Democratic County Commissioners in Orange County have unofficially committed to provide additional funding. That certainly should surprise no one.

While Mr. Cox is proud of the long standing cooperation of the board he appears to forget the years the Democratic Party controlled the board. We have attempted to serve the needs of the Orange County voters to the best of our

ability and judgment. This is in stark contrast to previous Chairman White and Mr. Cox after receiving a call, just before starting the meeting, from Governor Perdue instructing them to extend the hours. The hours were extended by a majority vote.

Time after time Mr. Cox has referred to the majority of the board. It is clear bi-partisan cooperation exists only when the vote supports the Democratic Party and their ideals, not all the citizens of Orange County.

Respectfully,

Katherine J. Knight  
Chair, Orange County Board of Elections