

Don't defund Democracy

Letter to the editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 04.13.23

Our Brunswick County commissioners are finally tackling one of the most pressing problems facing our county. Are they reining in the unchecked development that's overwhelming the county? No. Approving affordable housing for the workers of Brunswick County? No. Protecting our air and water from corporate polluters? No.

The "crisis" stirring our commissioners to action involves the Brunswick County Board of Elections (BOE). Or, I should say, the award-winning BOE, recently recognized as one of the top ten "Centers for Election Excellence" in America. Moreover, our director of Elections, Sara LaVere, is the new president of the North Carolina Association of Directors of Elections.

Confidence in elections has been undermined by a petulant former president and his enablers. They relentlessly push "The Big Lie," falsely claiming the 2020 presidential election was "stolen" and our electoral processes nationwide cannot be trusted. But Brunswick County's election processes remain free and fair, administered efficiently by the dedicated professionals of our BOE. We live on an island of electoral excellence.

In 2022, Republicans won every election in Brunswick County, yet our commissioners irresponsibly cry foul. They're demanding that the BOE end its membership in the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence (the Alliance), a national, non-partisan organization sharing best practices and helping local boards run fair elections.

Our commissioners mistakenly claim the Alliance is funded by wealthy liberals like Mark Zuckerberg and other tech sector billionaires. Although multiple sources (including the Federal Election Commission) have debunked this "fake news," our commissioners persist in their false assertions.

The County Commission has grossly underfunded elections in Brunswick County, allocating less than \$8 per voter versus the North Carolina average of \$17 per voter. Starving the BOE leads to only one conclusion: Our commissioners don't want free and fair elections.

The BOE should reject the commissioners' meddling in an election system that works superbly for county voters. Let's focus attention on the real problems plaguing Brunswick County and stop aiding and abetting election deniers.

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