

County Commissioners undermine election confidence

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

In 2022, after a nationwide review, Brunswick County's Board of Elections was recognized as one of just 10 "Centers for Election Excellence." It was praised as "a leader in safe, secure and inclusive elections that put voters first." Last month, Sara LaVere, Brunswick County's Director of Elections, was honored by her peers, who elected her president of the North Carolina Association of Directors of Elections. That's why it's so offensive that a Brunswick County Commission Resolution impugns the Board's integrity on the basis of debunked conspiracy theories.

The Board belongs to the non-profit U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence, which supports local election departments with private funding. Those funds were credited with saving the 2020 election when public funding proved inadequate for conducting safe elections during COVID-19.

The Resolution baselessly suggests that the funding was partisan and pressures the Board to withdraw from the Alliance. The fact-free accusation is yet another conspiracy theory accusing Democrats of "election meddling." PolitiFact debunked it, noting that "if meddling to benefit Democrats was the goal, then it was a strange strategy to provide the money to every single jurisdiction that applied."

The real problem is underfunding by NC's Republican-controlled legislature and county commissioners. Gov. Cooper vetoed a similar resolution in 2021, saying: "The legislature should start properly funding elections boards to ensure accessible, safe, and secure elections every time, which would end the need for [private] grants."

If NC's Republicans want to end the need for private funding, they could easily do so by using a tiny fraction of our projected \$3.25 Billion Surplus and 10.7% Revenue Increase for FY2022-23. Indeed, the Resolution recognizes the urgent need and "encourages the North Carolina General Assembly to appropriate" more funds.

But, until then, banning private grants because of debunked conspiracy theories would baselessly impugn the Board's integrity, recklessly undermine confidence in elections, and needlessly make it harder for us to vote.

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Supply