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MVA Receives Victory in Election Integrity Lawsuit

Minnesota Supreme Court finds Secretary of State's rulemaking on absentee ballots partially invalid.

PRESS RELEASE — FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. Paul, Minnesota – May 24, 2023

The Minnesota Supreme Court ruled largely in favor of the Minnesota Voters Alliance's (MVA) challenge to the Secretary of State's absentee ballot processing rule, which the Secretary had interpreted as allowing virtually any signature to satisfy the statute's signature match requirement for absentee ballots.

The Court rejected the Secretary's interpretation, ensuring that ballot boards in Minnesota cannot accept absentee ballots where identification numbers are mismatched and the ballot application and return envelope have different signatures. Despite the Secretary's urging to the contrary, the Court held that only those with physical writing disabilities can use alternative means of signing applications and envelopes.

With this proper interpretation in place, the Court held that this part of the rule and statute do not conflict. The Court also struck down part of the rule which allowed regular ballot board members, as opposed to party balanced election judges, to conduct signature matches.

The Minnesota Voters Alliance, represented by the Upper Midwest Law Center, filed its lawsuit in January of 2022 in the Minnesota Court of Appeals, and the Court of Appeals fully upheld the rule last summer. After granting review, the Supreme Court's decision affirmed in part, with the corrected interpretation above, and reversed in part by striking down part of the rule.

The opinion defeated the Secretary's interpretation, and the Supreme Court has interpreted the rule to ensure that the statutory requirement of signature matching remains.

From the Opinion:

"... In short, the statute requires that the ballot board be satisfied that the person who applied to vote absentee (the voter) is the person who signed the certification on the envelope."

We are pleased with this decision, which allows ballot board members to actually review whether “the voter” signed a ballot envelope. This lawsuit was filed to ensure that election judges can do their statutory duty, including a real signature match where there’s a mismatch of identification numbers on applications and envelopes. The MVA aims to make Minnesotans more confident in our elections and we’re glad this ruling does just that.

Read the full opinion [here](#)!

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