

THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION

P.O. BOX 278
Pablo, Montana 59855
(406) 275-2700
FAX (406) 275-2806
www.cskt.org



A Confederation of the Salish,
Pend d' Oreilles
and Kootenai Tribes

TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Joe Durglo - Chairman
Carole Lankford - Vice Chair
Reuben A. Mathias - Secretary
Ron Trahan - Treasurer
Leonard W. Gray
Lloyd D. Irvine
Steve Lozar
Jim Malatare
James Bing Matt
Terry Pitts

House of Representatives
State Administration Committee
Hon. Pat Ingraham, Chairman
63rd Montana State Legislature
Capitol Building
Helena, Montana

January 13, 2013

RE: House Bill No. 30 "Revise Late Registration Laws"

Chairman Ingraham and Committee Members:

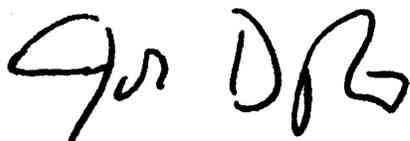
The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT or Tribes) oppose the passage of HB 30, a bill that would eliminate Election Day registration. It has been argued that HB 30 is necessary to ease the burden on county offices created when individuals register to vote on Election Day. However, the CSKT are opposed to this bill because it purports to solve this problem by interfering with its members' exercise of their right to vote. Specifically, it will disenfranchise CSKT members in Lake County, which has, since at least 2006, has had some of the largest numbers of same-day registrants out of all Native American counties in this state.

According to data from Montana Secretary of State, Elections and Government Services Division, Lake County had 283 Election Day registrations during last year's General Election, which was over three times the number in 2010. The 2008 General Elections had 267 Election Day registrants from Lake County, which was over three times the number in 2006. The primary elections follow a similar upward trend. These numbers clearly show that Election Day registration is utilized and working in Lake County. Without Election Day registrations, significant numbers of late registrants would have been turned away from the polls and prohibited from voting. As these votes were critical to decide both county and national representation, the elimination of Election Day registration would essentially mean the elimination of many CSKT members' votes.

The Tribes also believe that House Bill 30 is a backwards solution to the alleged problem of same-day registration paperwork. The way in which county offices process registration forms is not the People's problem—it is an administrative problem. Therefore, the focus should not be on how the People can yield their voting rights to make administrators' jobs easier. Rather, the focus should be on how the government can improve internal procedures and technology on their own end to guarantee the full and unadulterated exercise of the right to vote. Putting the onus on the People to ease bureaucratic problems is not the American way, and it is certainly not the Montana way.

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes oppose HB 30 and strongly encourage this Committee to not pass this bill to the House floor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Durglo". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name "Joe" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Durglo".

Joe Durglo
Tribal Council, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes