

TOWN OF STAMFORD, VERMONT

— Chartered 1753 —

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November 21, 2024

Sarah Copeland Hanzas
VT Secretary of State
128 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05601-1101

Re: Bennington-1 Re-Districting Error

Dear Ms. Copeland Hanzas:

I am sure you are aware of the re-districting error that occurred between the Bennington-1 and Bennington-5 Legislative Districts. It appears that residents on both sides of Barber Pond Road and South Stream Road were erroneously included in the Bennington-5 District and received Bennington-5 ballots for the November General Election. In accordance with the 2022 Legislative Reapportionment, residents on the south side of both Barber Pond Road and South Stream Road should have been included in the Bennington-1 District and received a Benn-1 ballot and voters on the north side of both roads should have received a Benn-5 district ballot.

The Board of Civil Authority for the Town of Stamford met on November 19, 2024 to discuss the ramifications of this error. The Stamford BCA hereby requests, in accordance with 17 V.S.A. § 2605, that the House of Representatives exercise its constitutional authority to judge the election, through this request to the Secretary of State. We request that the legislative boundary, including Barbers Pond Road and South Stream Road, as well as Route 7 and the remaining boundary line be investigated to determine how many voters were erroneously included in the wrong district and were sent a Bennington-5 District ballot instead of the correct Bennington-1 District ballot. The anticipated number of ballot distribution errors greatly exceeds the difference of votes per candidate. Bruce Busa, the losing candidate for the Bennington-1 District, lost by a small margin of 25 votes. He also received write-in votes in the Bennington-5 District which could not be counted.

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The Stamford BCA believes that the votes cast fairly and properly in Stamford, Readsboro, Woodford, Searsburg and Pownal should be recognized and accepted. A determination should be made to correct this unfortunate error by recognizing all the voters who reside in the Bennington-1 District who received a Bennington-5 District ballot in error. Only these voters should be given the correct Bennington-1 District ballot and given the chance to vote on the proper ballot. It does not seem prudent to burden all of the towns in the Benn-1 District with the expense of another election and this would invalidate the votes that have been properly cast. Voters who have already voted on the correct Benn-1 ballot, whether in Pownal or the other four towns, should not be given the opportunity to vote twice.

Thank you for your anticipated prompt response to this challenge and request for involvement.

Respectfully,

Natalie Yorke

Natalie Yorke
Board of Civil Authority Chair

NY/las

Sent by regular mail and email to sarah.copelandhanzas@vermont.gov