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**SENATOR HEATHER CLOUD RESPONDS TO GOVERNOR'S VETO OF SENATE BILL 74,
ELECTION INTEGRITY BILL**

Governor John Bel Edwards vetoed Senate Bill 74 on November 11, 2020. The legislation, passed by both chambers of the legislature during its recently concluded Second Extraordinary Session, would have clarified current law relative to the punishment for voting or attempting to vote illegally by mail. The bill would have added "absentee ballot applications" to the law.

Responding to Governor Edwards' veto announcement, District 28 State Senator Heather Cloud said, "Now is definitely not the time to veto legislation focused on election integrity and mail ballot security. We had a strong piece of legislation that added simple language to existing election law. Currently, our election law does not include the words 'absentee ballot applications.' Additionally, my bill clarified that it would be a crime punishable by up to two years in prison and \$2,000 in fines, or both, if someone attempted to vote or voted illegally by use of mail-in ballots. Further, my bill made clear that attempting to use false documents or falsifying information on an absentee ballot application would be a crime. I am shocked that Governor Edwards would veto such a clear and necessary election integrity bill."

"This is not a partisan issue. As Republicans, Democrats, and Independents, we must have secure elections and our elections law must clearly outline and address every known instance of voter fraud," Sen. Cloud said regarding the importance of this issue. "The violations must be clear and the punishment should be a deterrent."

Senate Bill 74 passed both chambers with bipartisan support, by a vote of 72-17 in the in House of Representatives and 29-6 and the Senate.

"Election integrity is near and dear to my heart as I had an election stolen from me and I had to not only fight for a new election but the integrity of every legal vote. I will be bringing this bill back up in the next session and I encourage legislatures all over the country to make serious reforms on the issue of mail-in ballots and ballot applications. The responsibility now falls on us as state legislators. We write the election law that governs each state. It's our responsibility and the time is now."

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