

Miller seeks Secretary of State post

Published by admin on Mon, 01/24/2022 - 10:00am



Joel Miller

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ROBINS – Linn County Auditor and Democrat Joel Miller, 66, of Robins, Iowa, is running for Iowa Secretary of State and making his rounds across the state in an effort to get his name and platform out to voters.

Incumbent and Republican Paul Pate currently holds the seat, and was elected in 1994 to a four-year term, and again in 2014, but has yet to announce his re-election bid. However, before facing Pate, Miller will first have to run against Clinton County Auditor and Democrat Eric Van Lacker in the primary election, June 7, 2022. Miller and Van Lacker both announced plans to run on the Democratic ticket last September.

Miller is focusing his campaign on four pillars:

- Make voting easy again
- Make voting elections fair
- Restore leadership, and
- Put voters first

“It used to be easy to vote, “ he began. “One of my pillars is making voting easy again, making elections fair again and allowing counties to have more than one drop box.”

Miller said that Pate “ordered that the ballot drop boxes had to be on county property. We had other drop boxes, but had to remove them.” Miller said the drop boxes were at grocery stores and under 24-hour surveillance, but he was asked to pull them out before the election.

“I had already been sued by (former president) Trump and didn’t want to take a chance that a vote didn’t get counted,” Miller said.

In terms of voter fairness, Miller said having one ballot drop box in some counties was not fair. “It used to be that neighbors could go pick up an absentee ballot and deliver it as well,” he said. “Now you can’t get a ballot unless you live in a house. They made it complicated – and for what reason? Where is the fraud?”

“It’s harder to get on the ballot,” he continued. “Some candidates may not get enough signatures. That strikes for fairness. Basically they’re saying there are only two parties and no one else can participate.”

Miller also said Pate stood by and said nothing on election changes. “Where’s the leadership?” Miller asked of his third pillar. “Pate didn’t register that he was monitoring election changes. In the meantime, our association of 99 county auditors headed by a Republican and other Republican auditors, publically testified against this bill that it was wrong, but they rammed it through in about a week.”

He alleged that Pate did nothing for election changes until the “11 hour. He’s a master at determining which way the wind is blowing, then finally making a decision.”

Miller said he is currently trying to get Pate to send out voter registration cards. “We’re in new precincts and new districts,” Miller said. “His predecessors sent them out, but he can’t make him make a decision. There’s a lot of indecision occurring in the office. Pate rushed in to inactivated voters. It was horrible leadership and bad decision making. Still, he hasn’t fixed some parts of it, and that’s not leadership.”

“You have to be innovative and come up with different ways and put voters first,” Miller said of his fourth pillar. “I printed a summary of election law changes in Linn County’s Penny Saver. The Secretary of State did not go out of his way to communicate voting changes to people. If I were

Secretary of State, I'd encourage county auditors to print forms in the local media and put that information in the paper."

Miller said he is working to end voter suppression and the need "to make voting easy again. I will motivate more people to vote in the end."

Miller grew up on a dairy farm north of Independence in a time where his family milked cows and delivered the milk door-to-door. He attended Hawkeye Tech and received a degree in police science, and later in electronics engineering. After serving as Jesup County's Deputy Sheriff at the age of 18, he joined the Army for a short stint where he was part of the military police.

He went to work in Oklahoma for AT & T as an electronics technician and came back to Iowa and worked at Teleconnect, which later became Telecom. He was in management there for 12 years. He also sold software for a time, was a Project Manager at Siemens and was IT Director at Four Oaks of Iowa.

Next month will mark his 15th year as Linn County Auditor, where he won the seat in a six-way race.

Miller has visited 32 Iowa counties in an effort to introduce himself to voters. "This office is too important not to have a Democratic candidate," he said, noting that he is also currently getting the signatures needed to be on the ballot.

For more information, visit his website joelmiller.org.