

Secretary of State candidate wants voting to be easier

- [By Matthew Rezab](#)

- Jan 13, 2022

Democrat Joel Miller is challenging Republican incumbent Paul Pate for Iowa Secretary of State.

A Democrat challenging for the Iowa Secretary of State position says recently passed laws have made voting more difficult, and he wants to make it easier.

Linn County Auditor Joel Miller announced his intentions last September to challenge Republican Secretary of State Paul Pate in this year's November election. He spoke with the Times Citizen on Tuesday.

Miller became widely known across the state when the campaign for former President Donald Trump sued him in 2020 after Miller - who was one of three auditors in Iowa - mailed out absentee ballot request forms with some information pre-filled out to Linn County voters. The Iowa Legislature has since made that practice illegal.

Miller said that process was part of what made him decide to run in the first place.

"The first motivator was getting sued by Trump in the summer of 2020 when I tried to make it easy to vote during a pandemic, as well as keep our voters safe and keep our election workers safe," he said.

The Iowa Legislature passed laws last year that reduced the amount of early voting days from 29 to 20, stopped counting absentee ballots once the polls close on Election Day (previously if a ballot was postmarked by the Friday before Election Day it was counted after polls closed), limited who was allowed to drop off an absentee ballot and limited each county to a single ballot drop-off box.

“What really motivated me even more were the election laws that got passed in March of 2021 and the lack of involvement of the current secretary of state in that legislative process,” Miller said. “If your goal was that you believe your voters are people that vote on election day, the law worked as designed.”

Traditionally, more Democrats tend to vote early or via absentee ballot and more Republicans vote on Election Day.

Miller said that Pate's office never registered as being for or against the new laws until called him out for it. He said as secretary of state he would work with lawmakers and make his position known on any legislation concerning voting laws.

In 2020, Miller printed absentee ballot request forms in the local media. He said 23- to 24 percent of the requests his office received were a direct result of those publications and he'd like to see it done statewide. He said he doesn't want unfunded mandates for counties, but would consider signing contracts between the Secretary of State's Office and newspapers or other publications in each county.

Miller said his campaign has four main pillars:

- Make voting easy again
- Make elections fair again
- Restore leadership by not sitting on the sidelines regarding voting law
- Don't ever forget about putting the voter first

The General Election will be held Tuesday, Nov. 8.