



February 25, 2016

Dawson County Clerk
700 North Washington
Room A
Lexington NE 68850

Re: Bilingual voting materials

Dear Clerk:

You'll recall we contacted you in 2012 about providing election materials in Spanish. According to census data, Dakota, Colfax and Dawson County were all now required to include election materials in Spanish under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act.

The Department of Justice clearly has outlined what responsibilities this imposes on counties:

What information must be provided in the minority language?

All information that is provided in English also must be provided in the minority language as well. This covers not only the ballot, but all election information - voter registration, candidate qualifying, polling place notices, sample ballots, instructional forms, voter information pamphlets, and absentee and regular ballots - from details about voter registration through the actual casting of the ballot, and the questions that regularly come up in the polling place. Written materials must be translated accurately, of course. Assistance also must be provided orally. Most Native American languages historically are unwritten, so that all information must be transmitted orally. Oral communications are especially important in any situation where literacy is depressed. Bilingual poll workers will be essential in at least some precincts on election day, and there should be trained personnel in the courthouse or city hall who can answer questions in the minority language, just as they do for English-speaking voters.¹

We have recently surveyed the counties' websites and discovered that Dawson County is the only county clearly out of compliance. You are providing significant information and forms online—and none of that is in Spanish.

Per your letter from 2012 (enclosed), we understand you are aware of your obligation to provide materials with appropriate English and Spanish options. We write with grave concerns about this failure to comply with federal law. Is Dawson County providing paper materials in Spanish? If you assert you have paper materials in

¹ Minority Language Citizens: Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, US Department of Justice. Available online: <http://www.justice.gov/crt/minority-language-citizens>

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Spanish, when will these be made available on an equal basis on your website?
Further, have you hired bilingual staff?

As you prepare for the upcoming primary and general elections this year, we hope all goes smoothly. We are available should you have any questions or concerns.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy A. Miller', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Amy A. Miller
Legal Director

cc: Secretary of State John Gale and US Department of Justice

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NEBRASKA



KARLA ZLATKOVSKY, DAWSON COUNTY CLERK

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January 30, 2012

ACLU Nebraska
Amy Miller
941 O St, Suite 706
Lincoln, NE 68508

RE: Election material in Spanish

Dear Ms. Miller,

In response to your questions regarding the Department of Justice requirements for the availability of election information in both English and a minority language, I can assure you that we are currently working on this process.

We have been working on this for quite some time and a meeting has been scheduled with the Office of the Department of Justice to use their services and to ensure we meet all specifications of the translation for every relevant document.

This is a diligent process and our goal is to complete this task as quickly and accurately as possible.

Sincerely,

Karla Zlatkovsky
Dawson County Clerk