

## Remarks of Kevin Flavin During the Township Board Meeting on September 14, 2020

I'd like to comment about a decision by Township Clerk Ute O'Connor to rule that Grosse Ile 2020 Trustee Candidate Mark Mills was ineligible to run for office on Grosse Ile and will not even be able to vote here in the General Election in November.

It is my understanding that Clerk O'Connor has determined that because Mr. Mills and his family are temporarily living in his mother-in-law's Wyandotte house while he comprehensively renovates his 108 year old historic house on the Island, he is no longer considered by Clerk O'Connor to be a permanent resident of Grosse Ile.

Similarly, Clerk O'Connor has ruled that Mr. Mill's wife and son are no longer residents of Grosse Ile, and therefore are not able to vote here in the upcoming election.

I'm not an attorney, but I researched this issue, and found out that a person in Michigan does not lose his or her permanent address by temporarily living at another location as long as there is clear intent to return home.

I talked to offices of the Clerk in several Downriver communities and asked them if I could register to vote there by temporarily living with a relative. They all told me that was not possible unless I transferred my permanent address.

Furthermore, it is important to understand that a citizen does not have to own a house to vote in Michigan.

The Michigan Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union issued a legal opinion that even the homeless can vote in this state.

I got to know Mr. Mills during his recent campaign for Township Board. I was very impressed with his distinguished career in law enforcement, family values and vision for Grosse Ile.

The fact that Mr. Mills and his wife are investing most of their life savings in renovating their house speaks volumes about their commitment to live on Grosse Ile for decades to come.

I think that Clerk O'Connor's decision to strip Mr. Mills of his right to seek public office on Grosse Ile is grossly unfair.

Even worse, Clerk O'Connor's disenfranchisement of Mr. Mills and his family members is totally unconscionable.

Moreover, as a taxpayer, I am very concerned that Clerk O'Connor's decision is depriving Mr. Mills and his family members of their civil rights in a manner that could subject the Township to the risk of losing costly litigation.

Finally, I'd like to point out that Clerk O'Connor's decision is not just about Mr. Mills and his family.

She has established a precedent that will apply to every Islander who temporarily lives in another community for work, major home renovation or any number of other legitimate reasons.

I ask that the Township Board reviews Clerk O'Connor's decision, and urges her to respect the rule of law by restoring the rights guaranteed to the Mills family by the Constitutions of Michigan and United States.

Thank you.