

Protecting Our Democracy's Frontline Workers

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During the 2020 primary and general election my office was threatened three times with gun violence. The first two didn't seem very credible and were along the lines of "if you give me the wrong party ballot, I will have to shoot you". The third one was received second hand from a party representative. He informed us that a voter had called party headquarters to ask where absentee voting was taking place, then said he should take his AK-47 there and shoot everyone. We immediately reported this threat to the city police department and County Sheriff. We didn't have a name. The police department offered to have an officer nearby over the next few days. After consulting our insurer, we have added security cameras in hopes of them having a de-escalating affect in the future.

Our board members were briefed on all incidents and their reactions ranged from offering to personally stand as armed guard when the threat was perceived as being from the other party, to laughing and expressing disappointment that the caller wasn't using "and American AR" when the threat was perceived as being from their own party. These board members also expressed support for those who participated in the January 6th 2021 events.

We have received several FOIA (Sunshine requests in Missouri) from groups seeking to identify voters who participated in the election, as well as technical information. Additionally, we get frequent questions around IP addresses/network activity, and vote switching. Answers provided are often dismissed.

Missouri has an open Senate seat this year, and the race to replace Senator Blunt has drawn a lot of attention. I am concerned particularly about the Republican primary, where there are 21 candidates, guaranteeing that no candidate will receive a majority, and making a very close race likely. I expect that there are at least a handful of candidates who will not accept the outcome of the primary. I expect the general election to be extremely contentious and high energy, which can cause voters to direct more abuse at myself and my staff. Of course, I expect the same of 2024.

On a personal note, I've lived in this community my whole life. My parents and grandparents always had the family name on the mailbox. I've taken my name off my mailbox.