



Alaska Must Stop “Decoy Dan’s” Election Shenanigans

A campaign of dirty tricks designed to confuse voters and leverage Alaska’s convoluted Ranked-Choice Voting system could flip control of the United States Senate.

DECOY DAN

- Alaska is no stranger to political gamesmanship. But in what the State [calls](#) a case “unlike any before presented,” someone seeking to boost Democrats’ chances in the U.S. Senate race has filed to run against Senator Dan Sullivan by mimicking his name, campaign, and website, and even switching parties to run as a Republican.
 - According to the [Director of the Alaska Division of Elections](#), Daniel J. Sullivan, Jr. even emailed officials asking to be listed on the ballot as Dan. S. Sullivan, prompting the Director to note that “‘S’ is Senator Sullivan’s initial, not yours.”
- The [Alaska Division of Elections](#) ultimately ruled that Daniel J. Sullivan was ineligible for the ballot. The Director found that he was not leading a good faith campaign, but launching an effort at “confusing or misleading the electorate and compromising the fairness of the ballot by attempting to access the ballot under a version you have never used (“Dan Sullivan”) and with a party affiliation (Republican) that you have never before professed.”
- Now, “Decoy Dan” is challenging that decision. His apparent goal: To mislead enough primary voters to advance to the general election, then leverage confusion and exploit the rules of Alaska’s Ranked-Choice Voting system to siphon support from Sen. Sullivan and propel Democrat Mary Peltola to victory.

RANKED-CHOICE VOTING STRIKES AGAIN

- This gambit is only possible because of Alaska’s highly flawed jungle primary and Ranked-Choice Voting system.
 - With Alaska’s jungle primary, all candidates—regardless of party—run in a single primary, and voters are allowed to vote for a single candidate.
 - The “Top 4” candidates advance to the Ranked-Choice Voting general election, where voters rank candidates by order of preference.
- Even a small number of voters misled into voting for Decoy Dan could swing the election.
 - Once “Decoy Dan” is eliminated, ballots cast for him are shifted to each voter’s next highest pick.
 - If those voters leave their second-place pick blank, their ballots are eliminated altogether.

- However, if they rank Mary Peltola in second, then voters attempting to vote for Sen. Sullivan would wind up voting for Democrat Mary Peltola.
- It is time to end this confusing, vulnerable-to-manipulation system once and for all.
 - Ranked-Choice Voting has plagued anyone trying to get a true measure of Alaskans' favored representatives since its inception.
 - Alaskans nearly [repealed](#) this convoluted scheme in 2024, coming just 700 votes short. Voters will have a second chance to repeal Ranked-Choice Voting this November.

ELECTION INTERFERENCE VIA BALLOT TRAP?

- The [U.S. Department of Justice](#), under President Biden, has treated intentional schemes that interfere with the voting process as potential civil rights violations, and efforts designed to cause voters to cast ballots contrary to their intent can raise serious legal concerns.
- There are serious questions being raised – including in a [complaint](#) to the Federal Election Commission – about the role of a political consultant associated with a Democratic SuperPAC that has supported Mary Peltola in “Decoy Dan’s” candidacy.
- If someone is attempting to cause voters to mistakenly vote for a different Dan Sullivan than the one they intend, it raises serious legal questions.

WILL COURTS GO ALONG WITH THE SCHEME?

- Though the Election Division found his candidacy was not in good faith and determined not to include him on the primary ballot, “Decoy Dan” has filed a lawsuit to compel the state to include his name nonetheless.
- Courts will soon have to determine whether to allow this obvious ruse to go forward.
- It remains to be seen whether the rule of law will be upheld in the face of this attempt to subvert the operation of a fair and honest election.