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I am here today to voice my support for HB 4127 and HB 4128. I have respect for our democracy and the institutions that keep it strong. The most important of these being my right to vote in an election free from fear or intimidation.

Without tireless and dedicated elected and appointed election officials, this would not be possible. Something has changed in the last couple election cycles.

I have never seen this in my 50 plus years of voting. Election workers are no longer putting their last names on their name tags. A recent U of M statewide public policy survey of elected and appointed government officials reported a majority experienced harassment, threats or even violence. A report from the National League of Cities found harassment, threats and violence directed at local officials is rising at an alarming rate.

An armed mob, protesting election results, gathered outside Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson's home while she and her family were decorating their Christmas tree. We all remember in 2020 when armed protesters flooded the Capitol in opposition to covid restrictions and of course when members of the far-right extremist group, The Wolverine Watchmen, were convicted of aiding a plot to kidnap our governor.

PBS reported that 9 in 10 Americans are worried about an increase in political violence. Since 2020, gun ownership has more than doubled in our state and with that, gun violence.

This is an everywhere problem affecting red, blue and purple communities. This threat to safe and accessible elections is unsustainable. I support these bills.

Linda Danders

1225 Ethel Street

Okemos, MI 48864

517-974-3402