

Let's be candid about Kander

Another View

Sen. Regina Birdsell

FAILED CANDIDATE for U.S. Senate, Jason Kander, was invited by the New Hampshire Democratic Party to be their keynote speaker for one of their annual fundraisers earlier this month. Some people may know Mr. Kander since he has been busy traveling to the early presidential primary states running for, I mean fighting for, unrestricted voting access.

Kander and his out-of-state colleagues believe they know best how New Hampshire should run elections. Since losing his bid for U.S. Senate in Missouri, Jason Kander has taken it upon himself to promote unfettered election access in New Hampshire. He views voting rights as his ticket to the Democratic Party nomination for President and has carved out one of the most extreme views on the issue.

Camping out in New Hampshire and accusing Republican legislators and Gov. Chris Sununu of disenfranchising voters has been his objective for over a year now. However, looking at other states around the country, particularly our neighboring states, proves that New Hampshire laws are far less restrictive even after passing certain voter reform laws.

All three of our neighboring states require voters to be residents in order to vote. Maine law even makes it explicitly clear that residency is not something you choose but something you must establish as a requirement for voting. Kander believes that our voter ID law is restrictive but he ignores the fact that Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont all require first-time voters to show identification in order to vote. Maine and Massachusetts even go as far as only allowing people without identification to cast provisional ballots, counting them only after identification is shown.

Kander's website only criticizes New Hampshire for establishing a \$5,000 fine for voting illegally when Massachusetts and Vermont each carry a \$10,000 fine and up to five and 15 years in jail. While we are flattered by the admission that our state plays a key role in national elections, according to Kander, these other states don't have restrictive voting laws. It would seem that Kander is just critical of New Hampshire because Massachusetts

and Vermont haven't voted for a Republican candidate for President in 30 years.

It only makes sense that if you want to vote in New Hampshire you should follow the laws of the state and be subject to the same standards as everyone else. Somehow Kander has skewed this logical idea and accused the legislature of pushing a poll tax. He must really hate the fact that Maine voters must also file a Maine income tax return on top of obtaining a Maine driver's license within 30 days of voting. By his warped logic, we currently have residents paying his so called "poll tax" while domiciled voters play outside the rules.

Kander's big money, out-of-state political action committee has already filed with the New Hampshire Secretary of State's office as an organization that will campaign against Gov. Chris Sununu this fall. Rather than working with the governor and Legislature to craft legislation everyone can agree with, Kander uses his political action committee to attack the governor and Republicans in the Legislature, losing all credibility on the issue.

In stark contrast to what the organization claims to be doing, Kander's strategy has the effect of disenfranchising voters by perpetuating scare tactics not based in reality that serve to misguide our citizens.

There has not been a single bill signed into law this session that would disenfranchise anyone from voting and I would oppose any legislation that does. Ironically, Jason Kander has been here so often lately he has potentially established a more credible domicile, under our current law, than some of the out of state individuals who currently vote here.

While it has been a pleasure having Mr. Kander use the New Hampshire State House as his prop to promote his out of touch, political agenda, I stand with our state's voters and would even offer to pack his bags for him as he makes his way back to his home state of Missouri where his extreme views have already been rejected by voters. Maybe then legislative staff will stop receiving mass text messages from "Ian" at Let America Vote NH telling them to oppose legislation being heard in the Senate.

Sen. Regina Birdsell, R-Hampstead, represents District 19.

