FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, August 27, 2020

Contact: Clerk Barb Byrum
Phone: (517) 256-3390

Statement from Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum on President Trump’s Attacks on Local Elections Officials

MASON – Today, Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum (D-Onondaga) issued the following statement on President Trump’s recent statements indicating that Election Officials will not be able to handle the November Election.

“It is nearly impossible to refute every incorrect statement that the President makes about the way our elections are administered, but that does not mean that I will not try.

It is bad enough that the President and his campaign-donor appointees are tampering with the US Postal Service in a not-so-veiled attempt to reduce the ability of average Americans to vote by mail, the safest way for them to vote in the midst of a global pandemic. But now, President Trump has suggested that our local election workers are the problem, and that they will ‘count the ballots wrong.’

Our election workers, from the local clerks to the poll workers on Election Day, have been working around the clock to prepare for the November Election. It is not surprising to anyone but the President to find out that we are in the middle of a health crisis and it is only logical to expect that voters will choose to vote safely from home by mail, as is their right in Michigan. Many of the same election workers have been counting the ballots for years and nothing has changed about their ability to do so. They are well-trained, dedicated individuals and they will ensure that our elections run smoothly.

Further, I have seen local clerks stepping up in proactive ways, reaching out to students who may not be coming back to campus at Michigan State University to remind them to update their voter registration. They have travelled to individual’s homes to verify signatures and have been doing tremendous personal outreach above and beyond the call of duty. I applaud and support these efforts.

Local clerks do need flexibility from the Michigan Legislature to start processing, not tabulating, absent voter ballots early as it will take time to process ballots with such a high voter turnout.

While Local Election Officials cannot count how many times they have had to refute President Trump’s false or misleading statements, they will have absolutely no trouble counting the ballots that come in during this Election.”

###