

Statement by Gardiner Democratic Committee Chair Mike Kruglinski—October 19, 2017

Republican shenanigans are keeping the absentee ballots out of the hands of voters from Gardiner and parts of Shawangunk. The unconscionable delay in those ballots going out is due entirely to the devious and cynical actions of the Ulster County Republican chair Roger Rascoe and the Republican Board of Elections Commissioner Tom Turco.

These officials attempted to bypass election law by illegally substituting one candidate for another, over a month after the deadline to do so.

Mr. Rascoe showed up at the Board of Elections on Sept. 28 with the bogus paperwork to substitute Jim Miller for his wife Kathy Miller to run for Ulster County Legislature Dist. 16. The only reasons allowed by law for a withdrawal past the legal deadline are death, moving out of the district, or being nominated in the primary for another position. As Mr. Rascoe well knew, none of these applied in this case.

Democratic Election Commissioner Ashley Dittus correctly rejected the invalid withdrawal and attempted to certify the ballot so that the absentee ballots could be sent out on time. Republican BOE Commissioner Tom Turco would not sign off on the ballots and has been holding our voters hostage in his attempt to circumvent the law. Because of this Dist. 16 voters are the only ones in Ulster County who did not get their absentee ballots on time.

This suppression of the vote is symbolic of what Republicans are doing across the country to disenfranchise those who do not support the racist, divisive, Trump agenda.

Ulster County Democrats were forced to go to court to get the absentee ballots certified and mailed. Their only interest was in protecting the right of everyone in the 16th District to vote. The right to vote is under attack and must be defended.