

MEMORANDUM

Date: 7 May 2026

From: Lawrence T. Peter, Member, Hillsdale County Board of Canvassers

To: Hillsdale County Board of Canvassers

CC: Hillsdale County Prosecuting Attorney; Hillsdale County Corporation Counsel; Michigan Secretary of State, Bureau of Elections; Hillsdale County Clerk Abe Dane

Subject: Potential Irregularity in Fayette Township Election –
5 May 2026 Special Election (School Millage Proposals)

As a member of the Hillsdale County Board of Canvassers, I have a ministerial duty to review and certify the precinct returns submitted for the 5 May 2026 election. I write to place the following matter on the official record of this canvass meeting.

Fayette Township has operated without a township clerk or deputy clerk for some time. For the 5 May 2026 election, the Hillsdale County Clerk, Mr Abe Dane, arranged for the Litchfield Township/City Clerk to serve as the acting clerk for Fayette Township. A formal complaint regarding this arrangement was filed with the Hillsdale County Sheriff's Office on 5 May 2026 (copy attached).

MCL 168.373 provides: *"If neither the township clerk nor any deputy township clerk shall be available to perform any necessary functions in connection with registrations, nominations or elections ... the township board shall appoint some qualified person who is a registered elector of the township to perform such functions..."*

A "qualified elector" is defined in MCL 168.10 as a person who has resided in the township for at least 30 days. The individual appointed does not meet this statutory requirement.

County Clerk Dane has publicly acknowledged the limitations of current law and supported legislation (HB 5717) to allow broader appointments in such cases. While I understand the practical difficulty of filling the position, the appointment process used appears not to comply with the plain language of MCL 168.373.

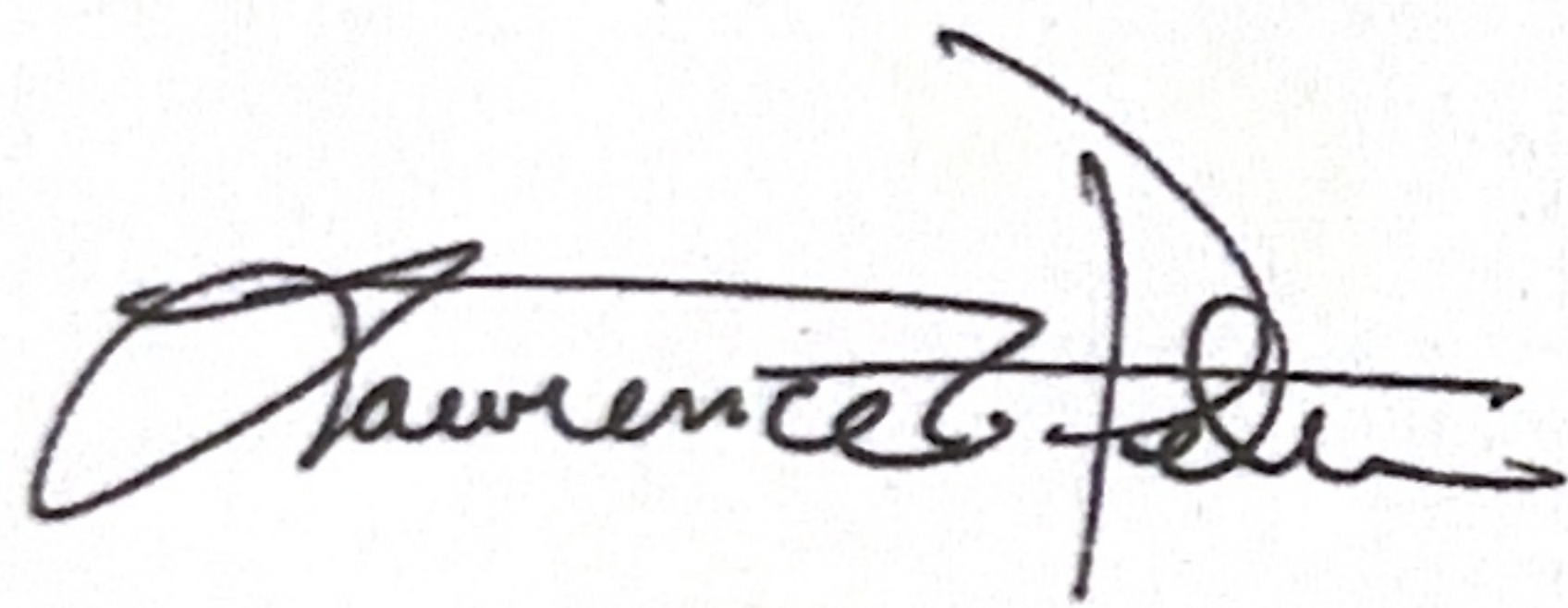
As a canvasser, my role is strictly ministerial. I have no authority to investigate, reject returns, or invalidate any portion of the election. I therefore respectfully request that the Board:

1. Enter this memorandum and the attached complaint into the official minutes and record of today's canvass;
2. Seek a formal written legal opinion from the Prosecuting Attorney or Corporation Counsel regarding certification of the Fayette Township returns; and
3. Refer the matter to the Hillsdale County Prosecuting Attorney and the Michigan Secretary of State, Bureau of Elections, for appropriate review.

Until such time as the potential legal issue regarding Fayette Township's election administration is resolved by appropriate legal authority, I will be unable to personally support certification of those results. I take no position on the ultimate validity of the results and ask only that the Board follow proper procedure to protect the integrity of the canvass and the public record.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lawrence T. Peter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "L" and "P".

Lawrence T. Peter
Member, Hillsdale County Board of Canvassers
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757-343-0090