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A Partisan Measure.

I have carefully examined the election law passed by the Second Oklahoma Legislature, and approved March 27th 1909, and in my judgment the law deserves condemnation in the severest terms.

The law is extremely partisan. Its purpose is to perpetuate Democratic politicians in power. The men who framed and enacted this law ^{apparently} care nothing for the honor of the state or the welfare of the people. ~~But~~ The voters of the State are opposed to partisan legislation. They want laws that will guard and protect the rights of the people, maintain good order, insure the impartial administration of justice, perpetuate our free institutions and encourage the growth and development of the material interests of our State. Any law that has a partisan purpose is dangerous in the extreme and should be voted down at all hazards. The people of the United States, at various times in the history of our Nation, have shown their disapproval of partisan legislation. The people of Oklahoma will bury this law in oblivion by throwing an avalanche of votes against it.

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It is important that every election law should be non-partisan. The whole super-structure of our Government rests upon the purity of our elections, and the sacredness of the ballot. An election law that is tainted with partisanship undermines the very foundation of our free Government. The people rule through the ballot. To contaminate that ballot with the machinery of a partisan election law corrupts the very source of political power, and endangers every other right and privilege guaranteed by our Constitution and Laws. To submit to a partisan election law means to make our election a farce, and a fraud, and transform the ballot-the symbol of freedom and liberty-into an instrument of crime, oppression and misgovernment. Let us have an election law that is free from partisanship, that gives to every man regardless of his political affiliations the right to cast a free and untrammelled ballot without delay, vexation, hindrance or annoyance.

The Law is Expensive.

This proposed election law is expensive.

The people are now burdened with taxes. In enacting legislation the cost should always be counted. No wonder the appropriations by one legislature aggregate the appalling sum of nearly \$7,000,000.00. Shall there be no end to this? Shall our taxes go on increasing from year to year? If so, free government is a failure. The people are willing to defray all necessary expenses of a good government, but are unwilling to pay one cent that is unnecessary. The proposed election^{law} imposes additional taxes upon the people. This in itself is sufficient to justify the people in voting against the proposed measure. The great problem of the future is to simplify our laws, and our Government, and reduce the cost of it. Have we grown careless and unconcerned about our public affairs? Shall we go on from year to year quietly submitting to unjust and unnecessary taxes? I hope not. Economy should be our watchword. ~~It is the duty of every citizen to~~
~~to vote for the law which~~ This law should be condemned at the polls because it brings additional taxes and burdens with no corresponding benefits and advantages.

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The Law is Complicated.

The proposed election law is complicated, intricate and mysterious. Simplicity is one of the requisits of every good election law. Every law enacted should be like a good piece of machinery, simple, that its provisions may be easily understood, comprehended and obeyed. The intricacies of the law are justly unpopular with the people. We don't want too much "red tape" about our election laws. I am opposed to complicated, intricate laws of any kind. The plainer our laws the better. The people want an election law that is easily understood and that will enable a man to vote quickly, correctly and with certainty. The more complicated the law, the greater the danger of mistakes. Let us have an election ^{law} that is free from ambiguities, and intricacies, that will enable every voter to register his will, with the ease and composure, and in a manner that becomes the dignity of every American Citizen.

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Means Disfranchisement to Many.

The proposed law means disfranchisement to many. A portion of our citizens ~~will~~^{may} be able to master the intricacies of the new law and vote intelligently. But many will fail. In fact the object of the law is to disfranchise a portion of our voters. The law itself defines who are qualified voters-male citizens "who are over the age of twenty one years, who have resided in the State for one year, in the county six months and in the election precinct thirty days next preceeding the election" But the law provides for a ballot that is intended to disqualify all who can not read, and commit to memory a long list of names and offices.

Oklahoma needs no education^{at} or property qualification for her voters. is a man honest, has he good morals, is he loyal and true to our flag and our free institutions-these are the vital questions to put to a man to determine his qualifications as a voter. Oklahoma's citizenship is of the best. We are not burdened with ignorant and illiterate voters. Few states, if any, in the Union out rank Oklahoma in the intelligence of her citizenship. But the object of this law is to disfranchise a large number of our citizens. It is a dangerous thing to begin the work of disfranchisement.

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Where is this matter to stop? If we are to have an education^{al} qualification for electors, why not also have a property qualification? And finally a man will claim a right to cast as many ballots as he *has* ~~is worth~~ dollars. After all it is not the illiterate voter who endangers our free institutions, but the vicious, immoral law-defying voter. It is not the men who can not read, who stand as a menace to good Government, but the educated criminal classes-the men who violate our laws, defy our public officials, and yet walk our streets and travel our highways free and unpunished.

Bears the Har Marks of Fraud.

This law bears the ear-marks of fraud and trickery. It seeks to do indirectly what the authors are afraid to do openly and directly. The law is a deception. Its purpose is to provide an educational test for the elective franchise. On its face the law says nothing about an educational qualification for electors, but under this law no one can vote unless he can read and commit to memory the names of all the candidates, the offices for which they are running, and the political parties to which they belong. This feature will be a source of annoyance to every voter.

If we are to have an educational qualification for electors, let it be made openly and above board. Let there be no deception, no trickery, no fraud perpetrated. Let the laws say what they mean and mean what they say.

Violates the Principle of Home Rule.

This new law, like the present election law, violates the principle of home rule. All the election machinery of the State is lodged in the Governor. The Chief Executive appoints the State election board; the state election board appoints the county election boards, and the county election boards appoints the precinct election boards. Behold this army of several thousand election officers! Every man derives his power ^{from} and owes obedience to the one man, the Governor of the State. Talk about centralization of power. Are the voters of Oklahoma in favor of placing the entire election machinery of the State in the hands of one man? What would the Democrats of Oklahoma and the Southern States think if Congress - now Republican - would pass a law giving a Republican President the power to appoint election officers in all the States of the Union to conduct elections when Congressmen and Presidential electors are to be elected. Would democrats submit to such a law without a protest? Would they think it a fair law? Before statehood the Republican Territorial Legislature enacted a non-partisan election law. The county commissioners elected by the people appointed the precinct election officers. Some of these boards were democrats, some republican; but they were men the people at

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home had elected. They were responsible to the people.

When did it transpire that the people could not be trusted to elect the officers who were to conduct the elections?

Why not let the people elect the state election board, the County election boards, and the precinct election boards? If the people - if the voters - throughout the state must be registered before they vote - why not let the people elect the man who is to register the voters in each precinct? When did the people of Oklahoma indicate that they were not competent to select the proper men to register the voters and conduct the elections? I can not comprehend how men who profess to favor home rule, who assert that the people are capable of self government can face the people and defend this law.

The Registration System Vicious.

The provisions establishing a system of registration are vicious in the superlative degree. The Inspector of the precinct - an officer not elected by the people - but appointed by the county election board - has absolute and unlimited power in determining who are qualified electors, and who shall be allowed to register. For a period of ten days - thirty days before the first Tuesday in August 1900 - this inspector is required to "canvass his precinct for the purpose of preparing and recording a list of the qualified electors of his precinct" There is no provision as to the time he shall devote to the canvass, what system he shall adopt, or what means, if any, he shall use to register all the voters. He is not required to visit the households in the district, that he may find the voters. So far as the law is concerned he may canvass all the time up and down the same highway, or he may canvass in some remote and unfrequented spot. He is not required to have an office or place where men may go and be registered. He is not required to give the voter any certificate showing that he has been registered. The law gives to one man absolute, complete, supreme and arbitrary power to make up the

