Daily Camera

Align county governance with current and future needs (Letter to the Editor)

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We have an historic opportunity to change how Boulder County is governed! You can be part of that by voting “yes” on Ballot Measure 200 to expand our board of county commissioners from three to five. For over 150 years, we’ve had the same three-commissioner structure in a county that has grown in population and complexity, and that configuration no longer serves us.

Structurally, three people deciding outcomes to important questions is not working. The dynamics in any three-person arrangement are antithetical to good policymaking — one person having the power of a swing vote when the other two hold opposite views, one person’s absence stalling policymaking when the other two are in opposition, two people forming an intransigent bloc such that the third representative’s position (and all citizen voices it carries) gets little consideration. Boulder County has witnessed all of these interactions among our current and past commissioners for decades. It’s time to improve and broaden discourse by adding more voices.

Representation also suffers under our current system. Our commissioners live in districts, but they’re elected at-large — all residents vote for all commissioners instead of each district choosing its own representation. Since most votes come from Boulder and Longmont, those cities determine representation for everyone from our unincorporated communities to our smaller municipalities like Lafayette and Erie. A vote for 200 means an end to a majority of our commissioners being voted in at-large and will elevate the voices of people throughout Boulder County. Five members also increases the ratio of commissioners to residents, improving outreach and accessibility for everyone, and bringing leaders in districts closer to the people they represent.

Again, we have an historic opportunity to align our county governance with our current and future needs. Please join me in voting “yes” on Ballot Measure 200!

Tina Mueh, Boulder