



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 16, 2010

Lisa Murkowski Has Slight Edge in Alaska Senate Race

Prior to the midterm elections, the Alaska Senate race was predicted to be the one to watch, as it went from a two-way race between Tea Party favorite Joe Miller and Democrat Scott McAdams to a three-way race after Republican Lisa Murkowski announced her decision to mount a write-in campaign in order to remain a contender. Thus far, the race has not disappointed.



Nearly two weeks after Election Day, the Democratic candidate has been eliminated, but the race remains tight between Miller and Murkowski. The most recent tally, however, shows Murkowski with a 1,700-vote lead.

According to [Fox News](#), “Senator Lisa Murkowski built a 1,706 vote lead over GOP nominee Joe Miller in Alaska’s still-undecided Senate race after election officials added the last big batch of absentee ballots on Monday.”

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While Miller has 90,458 votes, Murkowski maintains a slight lead, with 92,164.

Unwilling to go down without a fight, Miller has filed a federal lawsuit for the state of Alaska to strictly follow election law, which requires write-in ballots to have the oval filled in and the last name of the candidate or the name as it appears on the declaration of candidacy. In Alaska, that requires “Murkowski” or “Lisa Murkowski.”

Fox News explains, “The state has been using discretion in determining voter intent, allowing minor misspellings and pointing to prior case law as the basis for the move.”

[Yahoo News](#) reports, “Miller argues that election officials’ announcement Monday of their standards for write-in ballots — indicating they would interpret voter intent in some cases of misspellings — violated state law. Officials point to past procedures for tabulating write-in ballots as a precedent by assessing voter intent in the Murkowski case.”

Murkowski predicted that the spelling of her name could pose a problem, and even issued wristbands during the campaign in order to help voters spell her name correctly on the write-in ballots.

In fact, an Alaska radio host had hoped to complicate Murkowski’s write-in campaign further by inflating the list of write-in candidates for the Alaska Senate race after the Alaska Division of Elections ruled that it would give out lists of write-in candidates. The host, Dan Fagan, seized upon the spelling issue and urged Alaskans with names similar to that of “Lisa Murkowski” to register as write-in candidates in order to confuse voters and perhaps have them write in the wrong name.

Fagan, like many other critics in Alaska, asserted that the decision made by the Alaska Division of Elections provided Murkowski’s campaign an unfair advantage.



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Remarking on the bizarre case, [CNN](#) joked that the Senate race could be the “highest stakes spelling bee” in politics.

Responding to the lawsuit, Murkowski’s camp is accusing Miller of attempting to “disenfranchise” thousands of voters who could not correctly spell her name.

Miller’s camp is challenging all 7,600 write-in votes on the basis of misspellings, legibility, extra words, and oddly filled-in ovals.

According to Fox News, “Another 1,869 ballots have been challenged and not counted by the state. Many had Murkowski’s name written in, but included a blank oval. Murkowski observers objected to the decision.”

With more write-in votes due today, and as many as 600 overseas and military ballots uncounted, the winner remains undetermined, but the uncounted ballots are expected to be completed by Friday.

Photo of Lisa Murkowski: AP Images



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