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DIRECTIVE 2012-24

June 22, 2012

To: All County Boards of Elections
Directors, Deputy Directors, and Board Members

Re: Preparation for the Statewide Mailing of Absentee Ballot Applications for the
November 6, 2012 General Election

SUMMARY

This Directive requires each board of elections to update its voter registration database and resolve duplicate records in preparation for the Secretary of State's statewide mailing of absentee ballot applications for the November 6, 2012 General Election.

I. Initial Mailing of Absentee Ballot Applications

In 2011, the Secretary of State's Office issued Directive 2011-26 prohibiting the mailing of unsolicited absentee applications due to a lack of uniformity in practice across the eighty-eight county boards of elections. In order to ensure uniformity across counties and reduce lines at polling places for the November 6, 2012 General Election, the Secretary of State's Office will mail absentee ballot applications, by non-forwardable mail, to 1) every registered voter in Ohio in "active" status¹, and 2) every registered voter in Ohio who voted in the 2008 presidential election as reflected in the Statewide Voter Registration Database, regardless of voter status as described herein.

The absentee ballot application will be pre-populated with the voter's name, current address, and the local voter ID number, represented numerically and as a barcode. The voter must complete the application by providing the voter's date of birth, identification, and signature before sealing

¹ A registered voter has an "inactive" status (also known as "active-confirmation") if the voter was sent, but did not respond to a confirmation card mailed to the voter by a county board of elections. A confirmation card is sent under any of four circumstances: 1) NCOA process (see Directive 2011-15), 2) NVRA list maintenance (see Directive 2011-15), 3) the voter's acknowledgement notice was returned as undeliverable (see RC 3503.19(C)(3)), or 4) information contained on the first-time voter registrant's record did not match BMV/SSA records (see Directive 2012-16).

the application in the reply envelope provided and submitting it to the voter's county board of elections in person or by mail, with the voter affixing a first class stamp.

The mailing will also notify voters that:

- The deadline for returning a complete absentee ballot application to the board of elections by mail is noon on Saturday, November 3, 2012;
- The earliest day on which a board of elections may mail regular absentee ballots to voters who have submitted a complete absentee ballot application is October 2, 2012; and
- If a voter completes and returns the absentee ballot application, but instead chooses to vote in person at the voter's assigned precinct polling location on Election Day, Ohio law requires the voter to cast a provisional ballot.

Delivery of the applications by USPS is expected during the first two weeks of September, 2012.

II. Data Preparation by County Boards of Elections

To facilitate this mailing, each county board of elections must:

- Enter into its county voter registration database all new voter registrations and changes of address/name received through July 31, 2012;
- Resolve all in-county and cross-county duplicate records that exist as of July 30, 2012. Remember, it is never an acceptable practice for any county board of elections to simply "keep" a voter registration record to avoid resolving duplicate records;
- Update the Statewide Voter Registration Database (SWVRD) weekly by the following dates:
 - July 6, 2012
 - July 13, 2012
 - July 20, 2012
 - July 27, 2012

The Secretary of State's Office will be monitoring this activity and following up with those counties that fail to send the information; and

- On July 31, 2012, transmit to the SWVRD all new registrations and changes of address/name received by that date. The Secretary of State will contact any county that fails to send information on July 31, 2012.

III. Supplemental Mailing

In early October, the Secretary of State's Office will supplement the first mailing by sending absentee applications to individuals who registered to vote or changed their address/name after the initial mailing.

To facilitate this mailing each board of elections must:

- Enter into its county voter registration database all new voter registrations and changes of address/name it receives through September 28, 2012;
- Resolve all in-county and cross-county duplicate records that exist as of September 28, 2012;
- Update the Statewide Voter Registration Database weekly by the following dates:
 - September 7, 2012
 - September 14, 2012
 - September 21, 2012

The Secretary of State's Office will be monitoring this activity and following up with those counties that fail to send the information; and

- On September 28, 2012, all counties must transmit to the SWVRD all new registrations and changes of address/name received by that date. The Secretary of State will contact any county that fails to send information on September 28, 2012.

IV. Mandatory Posting at Voting Locations on Election Day

All county boards of elections must post a copy of the statewide absentee application mailing at each voting location on Election Day as a reference for voters who are marked in the signature poll book as having to cast a provisional ballot because they requested and were mailed an absentee ballot. A copy of the mailing will be provided to you under separate cover.

If you have any questions about this Directive, please contact the Secretary of State's election attorney assigned to your county at (614) 466-2585.

Sincerely,



Jon Husted