

DIRECTIVE 2026-49

October 15, 2026

To: Board Members, Directors, and Deputy Directors

Re: Updated Instructions for Reviewing and Canceling Voter Registration Records Identified as Deceased

SUMMARY

This Directive provides updated instructions for reviewing and canceling voter registration records identified as deceased after the close of voter registration following a review of the deceased data from the Ohio Department of Health and the State and Territorial Exchange of Vital Events (STEVE)¹, the Department of Homeland Security's Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) system, and the Social Security Administration's death master file². To the extent the Election Official Manual (EOM) instructs boards to delay processing deceased voter records received after the close of voter registration until after the election, this Directive supersedes and replaces that guidance.

INSTRUCTIONS

Boards must continue to use the review and matching procedures outlined in [Chapter 4 of the EOM](#) to determine whether a record identified as deceased matches a registered voter. Once a board confirms a match, it must follow the updated procedures below.

1. No Ballot Requested or Vote Cast

If the individual has not requested an absentee ballot or voted in the current election, the board may proceed with canceling the voter registration record.

2. Ballot Requested or Vote Cast

If the individual has requested an absentee ballot or voted in the current election, the board must flag the record for additional review. The board must do all of the following:

¹ [R.C. 3503.18\(A\), 3503.21\(A\)\(2\).](#)

² [R.C. 3503.18\(B\), 3503.21\(A\)\(2\).](#)

- Compare the date of death with the date of the ballot request or voting activity to determine whether the activity occurred before or after the individual's death.
- Preserve the voter registration record and all associated election documentation.
- Delay cancellation until voting history has been applied to ensure the individual's voting activity is accurately recorded.

3. Potential Activity After Death

If the board has reason to believe that an absentee ballot was requested or voting activity occurred after the individual's date of death, the board must promptly refer the matter to the Secretary of State's Public Integrity Division for investigation at EIU@ohiosos.gov or [file a complaint through the Secretary of State's website](#).

Cancellation Requirements

Boards must process records identified as deceased through STEVE and SAVE within 10 days of receipt from the Secretary of State, except when cancellation must be delayed under this Directive because the record contains current-election ballot or voting activity.

Boards can access the records provided by the Secretary of State at:

- **SharePoint > County (e.g., Adams) > Directive 2025-50 Voter Registration Data Integrity > 2026 > 10 October > (County Name)**
- **BOE Portal > STEVE**

Upon cancellation, the board must send written notice to the deceased voter's address using [Form 255-C](#), selecting the appropriate cancellation reason.

Cancellations After Poll Lists Are Generated

If a cancellation occurs after poll lists have been generated, the board must provide a supplemental list of canceled voters to each affected precinct so that election officials have accurate and current information.

Erroneous Cancellations

If a board determines that a voter registration record was canceled in error, the board must immediately restore the registration as if the cancellation had never occurred and notify the Secretary of State's office at SWVRD@OhioSoS.gov.

An eligible voter whose registration was canceled in error must be permitted to vote in accordance with applicable law and Secretary of State instructions.

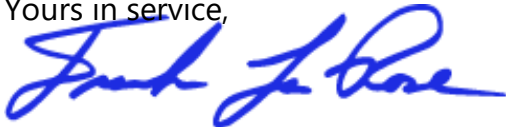
Important Reminder

These updated procedures are intended to allow boards to continue maintaining accurate voter registration records during the election period while protecting the accuracy of voting history and ensuring that potentially improper activity is appropriately investigated.

Boards must exercise particular care when reviewing these records. A voter registration record should not be canceled unless the board has completed the required review and determined that the deceased individual and registered voter are the same person.

Thank you for your continued diligence and commitment to maintaining accurate and secure voter registration records.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose

Ohio Secretary of State