

## **DIRECTIVE 2026-50**

October 16, 2026

To: Board Members, Directors, and Deputy Directors

Re: Updated Instructions for Reviewing and Canceling Voter Registration Records of Individuals Convicted of a Felony and Incarcerated

### **SUMMARY**

This Directive provides updated instructions for reviewing and canceling voter registration records of individuals convicted of a felony and incarcerated. These instructions apply to felony conviction information received from Ohio clerks of courts and federal felony conviction information provided to the Secretary of State by United States Attorneys and forwarded to the appropriate board of elections.<sup>1</sup>

Boards must continue to use the review procedures outlined in Chapter 4 of the Election Official Manual to determine whether an individual identified in a felony conviction report matches a registered voter and whether the conviction and sentence make the individual ineligible to vote under Ohio law. Once the board confirms that the individual is a registered voter who is incarcerated for a felony conviction, it must follow the procedures below.

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

#### **1. No Ballot Requested or Vote Cast**

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

Before cancellation, the board must confirm that the individual is currently incarcerated for the felony conviction and has not been released under circumstances that restore the individual's eligibility to vote under [R.C. 2961.01](#).

#### **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:

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<sup>1</sup> [52 U.S.C. § 20507\(g\)\(1\)-\(5\)](#), [R.C. 3503.18\(D\)](#).

- Compare the date of conviction, the date incarceration began, and any available release information against the date of the ballot request or voting activity to determine whether the individual was eligible to vote when the activity occurred.
- 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.

**Note:** A ballot request or voting activity that occurred while the individual was legally eligible to vote does not, by itself, indicate improper activity.

### **3. Potential Activity While Ineligible to Vote**

If the board has reason to believe that an absentee ballot was requested or voting activity occurred while the individual was incarcerated for a felony conviction and legally ineligible to vote, the board must promptly refer the matter to the Secretary of State's Public Integrity Division for investigation at [EIU@OhioSoS.gov](mailto:EIU@OhioSoS.gov) or by [filing a complaint on the Secretary of State's website](#).

**Note:** The board must preserve the voter registration record and all associated election documentation and coordinate with the Secretary of State's office regarding any additional actions necessary to preserve the relevant records and voting history.

### **Cancellation Requirements**

Boards must process records of individuals convicted of a felony and incarcerated 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) > Felony Reports > October 2026**

Upon cancellation, the board must send notice by forwardable mail using [Form 255-E](#), Voter Registration Cancellation Notice – Felony Conviction, informing the elector of the date and reason for cancellation.<sup>2</sup>

**Note:** If the felony conviction information provided to the board does not contain sufficient information to determine whether the individual is presently incarcerated and ineligible to vote, the board must obtain the additional information necessary to make that determination before canceling the registration. For state convictions, boards

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<sup>2</sup> [R.C. 3503.18\(E\)](#).

should contact the appropriate clerk of courts or county prosecutor. Questions concerning federal felony conviction reports should be directed to the Secretary of State's office at [Felony@OhioSoS.gov](mailto:Felony@OhioSoS.gov).

### **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 and treat the registration as if the cancellation had never occurred.<sup>3</sup>

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**

A felony conviction does not permanently disqualify an individual from voting in Ohio. The board's review must determine whether the individual is currently ineligible to vote because the individual is incarcerated for a felony. An individual who has been released from incarceration under circumstances described in R.C. 2961.01 may be eligible to register and vote.

These updated procedures allow boards to maintain accurate voter registration records during the election period while protecting eligible voters, preserving accurate voting history, and ensuring that potentially improper activity is appropriately investigated.

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

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<sup>3</sup> [R.C. 3503.21\(F\)\(2\)](#).