

ADVISORY 2008-32

October 30, 2008

TO: ALL COUNTY BOARDS OF ELECTIONS

RE: Search Procedures When Using the Statewide Voter Registration Database

In response to questions from boards of elections and others, this advisory serves as a reminder to boards of elections on searching for individual voter records when conducting voter identity and eligibility verifications.

A comparison is sometimes required between the information on record for a voter and the information provided by a voter at a later date in order to verify the identity and/or eligibility to vote of the person providing the information at that later date. For example, such searches are required, among other times, when determining the validity of provisional and absentee ballots, and when verifying that petition signers are eligible, registered electors. Such database queries must be thorough and consistent throughout the state in order to ensure that voters' rights are neither unduly limited nor limited to a significantly greater or lesser extent in some counties than in others.

In conducting a verification of a voter's identity and eligibility to vote, boards of elections must use the instructions provided in the "**Voter Query System v3.0 Instructions for Boards of Elections.**" Boards of elections must conduct a voter records search using the Voter Query System based on the information provided by the voter. A copy of the Voter Query System instructions and a link to the Voter Query System can be found on the BOE Extranet at: <http://cfonline.sos.state.oh.us/voter/VoterDisplay.aspx>.

If you are unable to find the voter during this query process, boards of elections must use the "wild card search" that is outlined in the "**Voter Query System v3.0 Instructions for Boards of Elections**" to ensure that a voter's record has not been inadvertently missed in the system.

For additional information and screenshots of the query system, please refer to the "*Voter Query System v3.0 Instructions for Boards of Elections*" publication available on the extranet at: <http://insite/boe/cbeinfo/voterQuery/InstructionsforVoterQueryFormv3.pdf>.

Any board of elections that has questions or needs additional information concerning the Voter Query System may contact Gus Maragos at gmaragos@sos.state.oh.us or (614) 466-2729, or Robin Fields at rfields@sos.state.oh.us or (614) 644-0770.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Brunner