

April 28, 2021

The Honorable Wm. Weston Newton, Chairman
House Legislative Oversight Committee
228 Blatt Building
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Chairman Newton,

I am writing as a follow-up to my April 7, 2021 letter to update you on the State Election Commission's (SEC) work to improve list maintenance processes and provide results of our research into several records showing a date voted after the date of death.

By way of background, in late Summer 2020, a Beaufort County citizen and the S.C. Republican Party began providing the SEC with lists of active voters they believed were deceased. SEC staff reviewed each case and found some records had already been made inactive through standard voter removal processes. Of the remaining records, some were made inactive based on the obituaries provided, and a small number could not be matched to the voter with reasonable certainty.

Six of the provided records showed a date voted after the date of death. SEC staff has reviewed each case and found no indication of fraudulent voting in the name of a deceased voter. We found:

- Two voters died after applying for an absentee ballot,
- Two instances of poll managers marking the wrong voter, and
- Two voters incorrectly assigned voter participation.

The details of each instance are provided in the enclosed report.

It is worth noting the recent implementation of statewide electronic poll books should significantly reduce instances of marking the wrong voter at the polls and errors in assigning participation.

The SEC continues working the Bureau of Vital Statistics (BVS) and the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) to improve death reporting processes. The SEC is also taking a closer look at the matching criteria used to compare BVS data and voter registration data to determine whether adjustments should be made. The goal of the matching criteria is to strike the right balance between removing deceased voters and protecting active voters from erroneous removal.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information, and as always, please feel free to contact me with any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Marci Andino
Executive Director

Enclosure

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Report on Records Indicating Election Participation after Date of Death

April 26, 2021

In late Summer 2020, the SEC was provided information on six voters indicating participation in elections after the voter's date of death. The following is a summary of the finding of research into each case.

Stout **Deceased:** 9/21/2014 **Participation Record:** 2014 General Election

Conclusion: Died after being issued absentee ballot

- 6/2/2014 – Returned absentee application
- 10/3/2014 – Ballot mailed to voter (ballot was not returned)
- Participation credit given when absentee ballot is issued

Youmans **Deceased:** 10/8/2014 **Participation Record:** 2016 Rep. Presidential Preference Primary

Conclusion: Wrong voter marked by poll manager

- Poll list shows Youmans' spouse's signature
- Spouse has no participation record
- Poll manager appears to have selected spouse instead of Youmans

Phipps **Deceased:** 4/20/2012 **Participation Record:** 2016 Rep. Presidential Preference Primary

Conclusion: Wrong voter marked by poll manager

- Poll list shows another person's signature
- Poll manager appears to have selected wrong voter

Rivers **Deceased:** 1/22/2016 **Participation Record:** 2016 General Election

Conclusion: Error assigning participation

- Voter NOT marked as voted on voter registration list
- Voter given participation credit in error during scanning voter registration list

Pulaski **Deceased:** 11/13/2015 **Participation Record:** 2016 General Election

Conclusion: Error assigning participation

- Voter NOT marked as voted on voter registration list
- Voter given participation credit in error during scanning voter registration list

McKeown **Deceased:** 10/10/2018 **Participation Record:** 2018 General Election

Conclusion: Died after submitting absentee ballot

- 8/2/2018 – Returned absentee application
- 10/2/2018 – Ballot mailed to voter
- 10/12/2018 – County office receives ballot by mail