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☛ Details: Proposed Audit: Voter Registration Address Verification

(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2005-06

(session year)

Joint

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on Audit...

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
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INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
(**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
(**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

* Contents organized for archiving by: Stefanie Rose (LRB) (September 2012)



STATE OF WISCONSIN
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Janice Mueller
State Auditor

DATE: September 15, 2005

TO: Karen Asbjornson and Pamela Matthews
Committee Clerks to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee

FROM: Jeff Ripp 
Program Evaluation Supervisor

SUBJECT: Audit Report 05-12: An Evaluation of Voter Registration

Enclosed is our evaluation of voter registration in Wisconsin, as requested by several legislators and approved by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee in February 2005. Concerns were raised after the November 2004 elections about voter registration in the City of Milwaukee and elsewhere, including the use of address verification cards to confirm residency and the adequacy of processes in place for verifying voter eligibility.

Municipal clerks are responsible for creating voter registration lists used by poll workers to verify that each individual requesting a ballot on Election Day is qualified to vote. Voter registration is currently required by statute in 172 municipalities with populations of more than 5,000, and locally in another 167 smaller municipalities. Beginning in January 2006, state and federal law will require voter registration statewide. The Elections Board is currently developing a computerized statewide voter registration system that is required to be implemented by January 2006.

 Existing voter registration requirements are confusing and municipal clerks are not consistently maintaining and updating their voter registration lists. As a result, current practices are not sufficient to ensure the accuracy of voter registration lists. We reviewed 348,000 records from 8 municipalities' registration lists and found 3,116 duplicate records, 453 ineligible felons, and 783 deceased individuals. In addition, we found 105 potentially improper or fraudulent votes in 6 municipalities for November 2004 elections, including 98 ineligible felons that may have voted. We were unable to review voter registration information in the City of Milwaukee because of an ongoing criminal investigation.

Address verification cards are used to confirm the residency of persons registering to vote by mail or at the polls and to detect improper registrations. We found that 46.0 percent of the municipalities we surveyed did not send address verification cards to persons registering for the November 2004 elections. Of the 1,887 undeliverable address verification cards we reviewed, most were returned because the voter had moved after the election.

We include recommendations to improve the accuracy of voter registration information and to ensure consistency among municipalities. For example, we recommend the Elections Board promulgate administrative rules to clarify the responsibilities of local election officials and specify procedures for using address verification cards. In addition, we recommend the Elections Board revise the voter registration form to help prevent ineligible felons from registering and voting.

* In addition, the Legislature may wish to consider other changes to improve the voter registration process, including adjusting the statutory deadline for voter registration, establishing uniform requirements for providing proof of residence, limiting the use of special registration deputies, providing flexibility in the use of address verification cards, authorizing civil penalties for municipalities and local election officials that fail to comply with existing laws, and requiring enhanced training for municipal clerks.

The report will be released on Friday, September 16, at 9:00 a.m. Please contact us if you have any questions.

JR/km

Enclosure





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Janice Mueller
State Auditor

September 16, 2005

Senator Mark Miller
106 South, State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Dear Senator Miller:

We have completed our evaluation of voter registration practices in Wisconsin and have issued our report today (report 05-12). The Joint Legislative Audit Committee approved this evaluation of voter registration practices at a public hearing on February 9, 2005. At the hearing, you requested information regarding poll worker training. Although not the main focus of our evaluation, we gathered some information during the course of our review that you may find useful. In addition, in June 2005 the Elections Board completed a survey of 1,346 municipalities on the compensation, recruitment, and training of poll workers, as required by 2003 Wisconsin Act 98.

Poll workers, also known as election inspectors, are appointed for two-year terms and, in general, must be qualified to vote in the ward where they are assigned to work. Their responsibilities include maintaining order at the polling place, registering voters, assisting voters, checking ballot boxes, resolving any challenges to electors, and serving as the board of canvassers for their polling location. The municipal clerk appoints one poll worker at each polling location to serve as the chief inspector who supervises and directs the activities of the other poll workers.

As part of our evaluation of voter registration (report 05-12), we selected nine municipalities for detailed review. As shown in the following table, the ratio of voters to poll workers in these municipalities ranged from 106 to 273 for the November 2004 elections. Poll workers are paid by the municipality where they work, but some municipalities use volunteer poll workers. According to the Elections Board survey, the statewide average hourly wage was \$7.31 for chief election inspectors and \$7.05 for other poll workers.

Ratio of Voters to Poll Worker
November 2004 Elections

	Number of Voters	Number of Poll Workers	Ratio of Voters per Poll Worker
City of Appleton	37,773	197	192
Village of Ashwaubenon	9,476	43	220
City of Eau Claire	37,612	330	114
City of Madison ¹	138,452	1,307	106
City of Milwaukee	277,535	1,917	145
Town of Minocqua	3,082	15	205
Town of Onalaska	3,271	12	273
Village of Plover	5,673	23	247
City of Waukesha	35,708	178	201
Total	548,582	4,022	136

¹ Includes volunteers and high school students.

The Elections Board, county clerks, and municipal clerks are all responsible for training poll workers. However, s. 7.31, Wis. Stats., requires the Elections Board to certify and prescribe by administrative rule minimum initial and continuing training requirements for chief inspectors. Although the Elections Board has not yet promulgated these rules, it is the Board's policy that chief inspectors attend at least three hours of initial training and six hours of continuing election education training every two years to remain certified.

The Elections Board began certifying chief inspectors before the November 2004 election. Since August 2004, the Elections Board has held more than 150 three-hour training sessions that were attended by nearly 8,000 individuals, including some municipal clerks. Everyone who attended these sessions was certified as a chief inspector. Of the 150 municipalities that responded to our survey, 147 reported that all of their chief inspectors were certified before the November 2004 elections. In the remaining three municipalities, some, but not all, of their chief inspectors were certified.

Current law does not specify minimum training for other poll workers and, as a result, the amount of training provided to these individuals is left to the discretion of the municipal clerk. The Elections Board survey found that of the 1,346 municipal clerks responding, 51.0 percent

Senator Mark Miller

Page 3

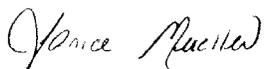
September 16, 2005

provided little or no formal training to poll workers who are not chief inspectors. Where training was provided, municipal clerks reported that it varied from a two-hour session before an election to a brief review of responsibilities on Election Day at the polling location. Municipal clerks also reported that they relied on the Election Day manual prepared by the Elections Board in training their poll workers.

Adequate poll worker training is important for ensuring that elections laws are implemented consistently and fairly across the state. While it appears that the Elections Board has provided initial training opportunities for chief inspectors, additional training opportunities may be needed to ensure that all poll workers have sufficient initial and continuing elections-related training.

I hope you find this information helpful. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Janice Mueller
State Auditor

JM/JR/km

cc: Senator Carol A. Roessler
Senator Robert Cowles
Senator Scott Fitzgerald
Senator Julie Lassa

✓ Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz
Representative Samantha Kerkman
Representative Dean Kaufert
Representative David Travis
Representative David Cullen





WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE

Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Committee Co-Chairs:

State Senator Carol Roessler

State Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz

For Immediate Release

September 16, 2005

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Audit Finds Significant Problems With Voter Registration Practices

(Madison) Today, the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) released an audit of voter registration in Wisconsin. Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz (R-Menomonee Falls) and Senator Carol Roessler (R-Oshkosh), co-chairpersons of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, stated that the audit addresses 11 specific recommendations to the State Elections Board to improve administration of the voter registration process.

Roessler stated, "We want to strictly adhere to the Legislative Audit Bureau's recommendations to eliminate statutory conflicts and provide uniform voter registration procedures training."

Voter registration is required by statute in only 172 large municipalities. Another 167 smaller municipalities have chosen to maintain voter registration lists. LAB surveyed municipal clerks from the 172 large municipalities and found great variation in the implementation of existing voter registration laws. For example, although address verification cards are the primary tool available to municipal clerks for verifying the residency of registered voters and detecting improper registrations, 46.0 percent of municipalities responding to the survey did not send address verification cards to individuals who registered by mail or at the polls on Election Day in November 2004.

"I was stunned to learn that our statutes do not set a clear statewide process regarding voter registration," remarked Jeskewitz. "Wisconsin is only one of six states that allows same day voter registration and when one-fifth of voters register on election day that is inviting additional problems for our poll workers and municipal clerks."

Although statutes require municipal clerks to provide district attorneys with the names of Election Day registrants whose address verification cards were returned as undeliverable, the audit found that only 17, or 24.3 percent of the municipalities that reported mailing address verification cards to Election Day registrants, reported forwarding the names from returned cards to the district attorney after the November 2004 elections.

"I don't know how we can expect municipal clerks to do their jobs properly when we not only allow same day registration, but have also not given them a clear process to follow for how to register someone in the first place," declared Jeskewitz.

The audit also found that current voter registration practices are not sufficient to ensure the accuracy of voter registration lists used by poll workers or to prevent ineligible persons from registering to vote. LAB reviewed 348,000 records from the voter registration lists of 8 municipalities and found the lists

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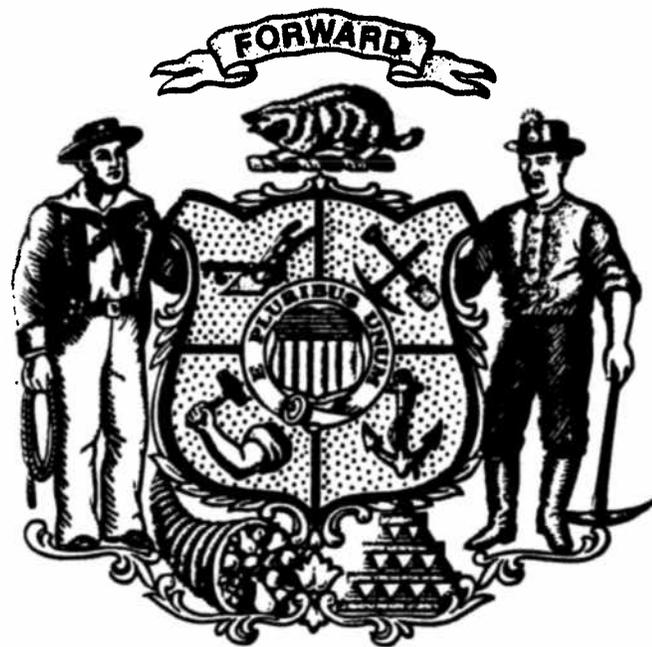
contained 3,116 duplicate records, 453 ineligible felons, and 783 deceased individuals. In addition, the audit identified 105 instances of voting irregularities in six municipalities, including 98 ineligible felons who may have voted.

Roessler reacted, "I fully expect the Elections Board will implement LAB's recommendation to require registrant to certify they are not currently serving a sentence or on probation or parole for a felony sentence. Surely, this will inform felons of the voting laws, put law enforcement in a better position for prosecuting felons if they vote, and eliminate ambiguity for our clerks and citizenry."

The audit, which was requested by Senator Joseph Leibham (R-Sheboygan), Representative Jeff Stone (R-Greendale), and a number of other legislators, was approved by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee in February 2005. The audit was prompted, in part, by concerns about voting irregularities in the City of Milwaukee in the November 2004. However, voter registration data and address verification cards were not made available to LAB due to an ongoing investigation by the Milwaukee County District Attorney and the U.S. Attorney.

Co-chairs Roessler and Jeskewitz indicated that the Joint Legislative Audit Committee will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, October 18th, to consider the audit findings and review LAB's recommendations. The co-chairs also look forward to working closely with the 2004 Legislative Council Study Committee on Election Law Review as they bring forward recommendations for change to the full Legislature. The audit report is available on the website of the Legislative Audit Bureau at www.legis.state.wi.us/lab or by calling (608) 266-2818 and requesting a copy of report 05-12.

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Janice Mueller
State Auditor

September 21, 2005

Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz
314 North, State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Dear Representative Jeskewitz:

As per your request, we are providing a second copy of the reference table we created to compare the proposals before the Joint Legislative Council Special Committee on Election Law Review to the options for legislative consideration presented in our audit of voter registration (report 05-12).

Please note that the reference table is not intended to represent all proposals before the Special Committee and identifies only those proposals related to voter registration that were contained in publicly available drafts as of September 15, 2005. In each case, the proposal descriptions have been abbreviated for ease of use.

I hope you find this information helpful. Please contact me with any further questions.

Sincerely,

Janice Mueller
State Auditor

JM/jc

Enclosure

Legislative Council Proposals Related to Voter Registration

NOTE: Listed below are bill drafts proposed for consideration by Leg. Council, but none have been formally approved or introduced. Leg. Council is considering additional drafts on other election topics; however only the drafts pertaining to voter registration are listed below.

As of September 15, 2005

Proposal	Subject	LAB Option/Recommendation
104/2	Require late registration to be completed by the Friday preceding the election.	
143/1	Change deadline for registration to the 5 th Monday preceding election (29 days) rather than the 2 nd Wednesday preceding the election (13 days).	Move up registration deadline and/or eliminate registration after the deadline, but no date specified. (pp. 25-26)
144/1	Discontinue the use of corroborating electors to verify residence of persons registering to vote.	
145/2	Require that registration officials sign registration forms attesting that the forms are legible and complete.	Require municipal clerks to track the method by which persons register to vote. (p. 30)
148/1	Eliminate requirement that mail-in registration forms include pre-paid postage.	
165/2	Eliminate "roving" special registration deputies and registration at register of deeds office, but allow clerks to designate alternative locations for registration and to appoint special registration deputies to work there.	Require Elections Board to establish training requirements for special registration deputies and limit the appointment of special registration deputies to persons who are properly trained. (pp. 28-29)
167/1	Prohibit persons who gather registration forms (treated as mail-in registrations if 165/2 is approved) from being paid based on the number of forms submitted.	Prohibit compensation based on number of registration forms submitted. (p. 29)
168/2	Send address verification cards and require ID at the polls for all persons who register in a manner other than in-person with the clerk or at designated sites.	Send address verification cards to all registrants, but provide greater flexibility to clerks and district attorneys in dealing with returned cards. (p. 39)

Proposal	Subject	LAB Option/Recommendation
169/1	Authorize registration to occur at the office of the county clerk and county election commission	
181/1	Require ID at polls for all elections (not just federal) for persons who register by mail	
188/2	Establish a fee for accessing information on statewide voter registration list.	
189/1	Require clerks to mail address verification cards within 10 days of receiving registration form.	Establish a deadline for mailing address verification cards, but no deadline specified. (p. 39)
190/1	Require registration form to include space for an out-of-state drivers license number if used as ID, require Elections Board to coordinate with other states.	
194/1	Allows homeless persons to present a letter from a social service agency stating the person's best known address.	
197/2	Require proof of residence for all registrants, regardless of the mechanism (in person, mail, same day, etc). Establishes one uniform list of documents that may be used by first-time voters who register by mail and persons who register to vote at the polls on Election Day. Create consistency between federally and state-required proof-of-residence documents.	Establish uniform proof of residence requirements for all registrants, revise list of acceptable documents for consistency with federal law, and eliminate provision allowing voter to hand-print corrections on documents used as proof-of-residence. (pp. 29-30)

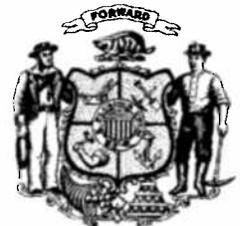
★

Other Policy Options for Legislative Consideration in Report 05-12 with no Leg. Council counterpart:

- Require municipal clerks to track which registration forms are submitted by special registration deputies. (p. 29)
- Require municipal clerks to make publicly available a list of special registration deputies. (p. 29)
- Allow Elections Board to mail address verification cards on behalf of municipal clerks (p. 38)
- Authorize civil penalties in addition to existing criminal penalties for failure to follow election laws. (p. 53)
- Establish minimum training requirements for municipal clerks in addition to requirements for poll workers. (p. 57)



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





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Unsent voter cards don't signal fraud, official says

But some say gap in numbers points to continuing problems

By GREG J. BOROWSKI
gborowski@journalsentinel.com

Posted: Jan. 18, 2005

Milwaukee's top election official said Tuesday that claims of fraud in the Nov. 2 election are overblown, questioning the notion that some 10,000 verification cards that couldn't be processed reflect that number of ineligible voters.

Lisa Artison, executive director of the city Election Commission, said the number of cards that could not be sent out this time was comparable to the number after the 2000 presidential election.

But state Rep. Jeff Stone (R-Greendale) said that is evidence of continuing problems and noted he is looking into whether the state, through the Legislative Audit Bureau or Elections Board, can review how Milwaukee ran the Nov. 2 election.

Meanwhile, Racine officials said they do not send out any confirmation cards. And other cities, including Madison and Waukesha, have not completed the process, which the state Elections Board does not track.

"The Election Commission is not in the business of perpetuating fraud," Artison said, in her first comments since the issue surfaced Friday. "We are all about conducting elections within the purview of the law. Period."

At issue is a gap between the city's estimate of 84,000 election-day registrants and 73,079 verification cards that were sent, as required by law.

Local bloggers and others, including talk radio hosts, have labeled the gap as evidence of more than 10,000 illegally cast ballots.

Stone has stopped short of calling the ballots fraudulent but said "it casts doubt over the 10,000 votes, who cast the 10,000 votes, where those people live and whether they were eligible to vote in the city of Milwaukee."

At minimum, Stone said, the situation shows more problems at the city Election Commission, where some 20,000 registration cards were not processed until the last minute; some people did not get the absentee ballots they requested; and 238 ballots received by mail were not delivered to the polls on time.

In addition, the state GOP before the election challenged thousands of addresses as non-existent, though it remains unclear how many people - if any - voted from those addresses.

"I think the numbers are just staggering," Stone said. "In terms of the cards they can't process, it's a tremendous error or failure rate."

2000 and 2004 comparable

If the 84,000 estimate of election-day registrants is accurate, 13% of the cards could not be processed. The 84,000 number, about 30% of the 277,535 people who voted in the November election, includes regular voters who may have moved, as well as new voters.

The 10,000 votes questioned represents 3.6% of all voters.

Artison said there are many reasons cards may not be processed, including illegible or missing information, such as a signature or date of birth. Some cards may also have been duplicates, though no tally has been made of how many fall into each category.

After the 2000 presidential election, she said, the initial city estimate to the state was that 81,000 people registered and voted. That year, the cards that were ultimately able to be processed numbered 73,847.

In 2000, 245,670 people voted in Milwaukee. The 7,153 same-day registrations that couldn't be processed then represented 2.9% of the total.

Artison also noted anyone who registered on election day had to present proper identification, such as a driver's license or utility bill, before being given a ballot.

"I think clearly there is an agenda at work here," Artison said of criticism she has faced. "Our agenda is conducting elections within the law."

Review panel to meet

A city elections task force, appointed by Mayor Tom Barrett, will hold its first meeting Friday. Critics argue the task force, which includes Artison and is made up of all city employees or officials, will not be independent enough.

Sharon Robinson, the head of the city Department of Administration and chair of the task force, said the panel would review Stone's complaints, as well as other concerns that have been raised.

Stone's concerns center on the verification process election officials are required to go through after an election. This involves sending a postcard to anyone who registered on election day. Those who do not respond are not included on future voter rolls.

Although Stone criticized Milwaukee for not mailing out the cards until Jan. 6, several other cities checked Tuesday - Waukesha, Madison and Racine - have not begun, or are still working on, the process.

Kevin Kennedy, executive director of the state Election Board, said state laws don't specify a deadline for completing this process. As a practical matter, local clerks need to complete it in time for the next election, in this case a February primary.

Kennedy said his office does not track how many registrations cannot be processed, or how many of the confirmation cards that are sent out are returned as undeliverable. Under state law, he said, any that are returned must be sent to the local district attorney's office.

Artison said her staff had not counted how many cards had come back so far, but said it amounted to several hundred. She said cards could be undeliverable for many reasons, including a data entry error on an address, a missing apartment number or cases where the voter has moved since the election.

In Waukesha, 8,748 voters registered on election day, out of more than 35,000 who turned out at the polls. Deputy City Clerk Marie Bieber said confirmation cards would be sent out soon, but she does not expect an unusually high number of returns.

In Madison, the city clerk's office doesn't keep a tally of same-day registrants whose addresses could not be verified. In the November election, 17,467 people registered at the polls, but city officials have no idea how many of those addresses could be verified, said Sharon Christensen, deputy city clerk.

Racine City Clerk Carolyn Moskonas said 37,466 people cast votes on Nov. 2, with at least 4,000 "new" same-day registrations - a figure that does not include any voters who re-registered because they changed addresses.

But she can't estimate how many more than 4,000 there might be and doesn't expect to finish processing the November election until at least the end of January.

Moskonas said Racine does not send postcards to try to confirm information on same-day registrations.

Scott Williams, Patrick Marley and Tom Kertscher of the Journal Sentinel staff contributed to this report.

From the Jan. 19, 2005, editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
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Voter verification incomplete?

By Dustin Block

RACINE - State Rep. Robin Vos accused the city of Racine on Wednesday of violating state law by failing to send out voter verification cards to people who registered to vote on the same day as the Nov. 2 election.

"Racine County residents deserve fair and proper elections," Vos, R-Caledonia, said. "I'm disappointed to see that the city of Racine isn't doing everything possible to ensure this happens, especially when Wisconsin law requires it."

Racine City Clerk Carolyn Moskonas, who was recently appointed to the position, confirmed Wednesday that the city doesn't send out postcards to same-day voter registrants. She added that there is no record of the city ever sending out postcards to verify the registrations.

"My predecessor didn't do it, and there's no money in my budget to do it," Moskonas said.

At issue are the more than 3,000 people who signed up to vote in the city of Racine on election day. In the weeks leading up to the election, Moskonas and her three-person staff called or sent letters to people who registered to vote.

But since Nov. 2, Moskonas said her staff has focused on processing the election, which saw about 38,000 city residents vote. Moskonas said her office won't be done with the election until the end of January - long after anything could be done to impact the election.

"All it could do is clean up our poll lists," she said, "it's not like we could get the votes back."

Other cities in Wisconsin send postcards to same-day registrants to confirm that their address matches their registration. If postcards are returned undeliverable, the cards are turned over to the district attorney's office for an investigation into possible voter fraud.

Vos wrote a letter to Racine Mayor Gary Becker asking the city to send out the postcards before the city's Feb. 15 primary election.

While there is no penalty for a municipality failing to send out post cards to verify voter registrations, Vos said that a public officer who intentionally fails or refuses to perform a mandatory duty can be charged with a felony. If found guilty, the public official could be fined \$10,000 and put in jail for up to 6 months, Vos said.

Original URL: <http://www.jsonline.com/news/metro/jan05/295944.asp>

Over 1,200 voters' addresses found invalid

Some mistakes easily explained, but concerns raised about shoddy record keeping, poss

By GREG J. BOROWSKI
gborowski@journalsentinel.com

Posted: Jan. 24, 2005

A review of Milwaukee voting records from the Nov. 2 presidential election has found more than 1,200 ballots cast from invalid addresses in the city, including many cases in which the voter could not be located at all.

The number is a result of a detailed computer analysis by the Journal Sentinel of the city's voter records and represents about 0.4% of the 277,535 ballots cast in the city in the hard-fought election. Some of the problems may be due to flawed record keeping, such as transposed digits or incorrect street names. Many others, however, cannot easily be explained.

The newspaper's review, the most extensive analysis done so far of the election, revealed 1,242 votes coming from a total of 1,135 invalid addresses. That is, in some cases more than one person is listed as voting from the address. Of the 1,242 voters with invalid addresses, 75% registered on site on election day, according to city records.

While the number is not enough to have determined the outcome of the statewide presidential contest, the revelation prompted renewed criticism Monday by state Republicans and raised concerns at City Hall about how well records were kept on and after a frenzied election day.

Already, the newspaper has reported that about 8,300 more votes were cast than the number of people recorded by the city as voting. This appears to be due to cases where cards from those who presented identification and registered on election day could not be processed, a gap that the city's own estimates had put at more than 10,000.

In any case, those are not included in the city database and are not part of the paper's review, which involved checking each voter's address against two separate lists of properties in the city.

A spot check of addresses that came back as invalid found cases where the address in question is a park, a baseball diamond and at or near the W. Wisconsin Ave. bridge. In most cases, though, there simply was no building at that address.

"I suspect it's just the tip of the iceberg," said Rick Graber, chairman of the state Republican Party. "If there ever was a need for a full-blown, real investigation into what went on, this is enough evidence for it."

He said the investigation should be done by an outside entity, not a task force such as the one appointed by Mayor Tom Barrett that includes only city employees.

Changes needed

Barrett Chief of Staff Patrick Curley said the newspaper's findings underscore the need to improve the handling of elections, particularly large-turnout ones that strain the system.

Invalid Addresses



Photo/Tom Lynn

One of hundreds of non-existent addresses that turned up on Milwaukee's voter rolls for Nov. 2 is 107 E. Wright St., the site of this playground. A newspaper review found 1,242 votes coming from 1,135 invalid addresses.



Photo/Tom Lynn

The address listed on the city voter rolls for one person who voted in the November election is 945 N. 16th St., which is a lot and alley between 939 and 953 N. 16th St.



Photo/Benny Sieu

One of the invalid

Curley said he believes the problematic addresses - less than 1% of those who voted - are a sign of procedural problems in the Election Commission office, not widespread fraud.

"The process is what we've charged the election task force with," Curley said. "Obviously, improvements are needed."

Lisa Artison, executive director of the city Election Commission, said simply: "The results you obtained make it clear the new statewide voter system is very badly needed and long overdue."

But that system, to be online late this year, will do little to safeguard against problems with same-day voter registration, or with the flood of registration cards the city received in the final days before Nov. 2.

While those who register on election day have to present valid identification, it is impossible to check on the spot if the address provided is valid.

Indeed, the city has been unable to process thousands of the registration cards, which officials say are illegible or are lacking required information, such as a birth date. Thus, those voters cannot be sent verification cards, as required under state law.

Artison was to meet Monday with the district attorney's office to discuss the cards that could not be processed, but the meeting was postponed. Artison said Mike Mahoney, the assistant district attorney in charge of election issues, asked for the meeting.

Under state law, verification cards that are returned as undeliverable must be sent to the local district attorney, though the Journal Sentinel has found spotty compliance statewide. Artison has said "several hundred" of the 73,079 cards that were sent out Jan. 6 have come back. Those have not yet been forwarded to the district attorney.

Questions about the accuracy of the city's voter rolls, and whether adequate safeguards are in place to prevent fraud, were raised before the Nov. 2 election.

Six days before the election, the state Republican Party challenged 5,619 addresses on the city voter rolls as non-existent, including vacant lots, a billboard and a gyros stand. The challenge, though, was rejected by the city Election Commission, which said the GOP had not met the high legal standard for dropping names from voter rolls.

A review by the city attorney's office found many cases where the addresses did exist, but could be explained by errors such as numbers from registration cards that were transposed. In other cases, though, officials agreed that addresses on the GOP list didn't exist.

The city later agreed to have poll workers require identification from anyone attempting to vote from addresses on the GOP list.

At the time, the Republican Party acknowledged that it could not say whether anyone had voted from non-existent addresses in past elections - and since the election, it has made no specific allegations of fraudulent voting in Milwaukee.

Nevertheless, the Journal Sentinel filed an open records request Nov. 8 seeking a computerized list of all registered voters, including a notation of those recorded as having voted Nov. 2. The city provided the information Thursday.

In checking the list for invalid addresses, the newspaper used computer software to compare the addresses of all 269,212 recorded as voting against a U.S. Postal Service list of addresses. That process revealed 31,255 questionable addresses - but that was mainly due to apartment buildings, in which the software read a unit number as an unmatchable address.

Once those were taken out, about 2,900 addresses remained. Each was then entered into the City of Milwaukee's own database of properties. At that point, about 1,100 non-existent addresses remained.

As an additional step, the newspaper sent reporters to 40 randomly selected suspect addresses. None of them existed.

addresses on the city's voter rolls is 9875 W. Mill Road, which is the northeast corner of Menomonee Park.

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At that point, reporters tried to match the names of a sample 300 of the listed voters against other public records, to determine if a clerical error was involved.

In about 20% of the cases, it appears as though a clerical error led to the invalid address. For example, one voter's address was incorrectly listed as 3130 S. 15th St., which does not exist. That person does live at 3130 S. 15th Place, however. In other cases, digits in an address were transposed.

Shirley Dolgner, 73 and a first-time voter in November, was surprised to learn that what she had dutifully printed out on her card on election day was wrong in the city's system.

Her S. 68th St. address, where she has lived for 20-plus years, went into the voter rolls as S. 63rd St.

"I wrote this myself. Why would this come up like this?" she said. "If this is the system, it's not working very well."

But for 80% of the other names in that sample list, no one with the name could immediately be found in other public record searches. That means there are potentially hundreds of cases in which a vote was counted for someone whose existence could not be confirmed, at an address that does not exist.

Graber said that points to the need for election reforms, such as requiring that all voters present photo identification at the polls.

"I think it's probably premature to judge if it's incompetence or fraud," he said. "I think the answers will become clearer as more investigation is done."

The state GOP filed its own open records request for election information Nov. 16. Graber said the party has not yet received the information it requested.

Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle has vetoed the photo identification requirement and says he will do so again. It is opposed by many Democrats, including Barrett, who say it could become an impediment to voting for some.

One safeguard against fraud is the quality of the list of eligible voters, which typically is purged only once every four years - after a presidential contest. Milwaukee is planning to update its list soon, in part to check its accuracy as it becomes part of a new statewide voter list.

Each state must have such a list in place under a federal law passed after the 2000 election. Wisconsin's is to be completed late this year. It will be set up so that if a voter moves to a new community, that person's name would automatically be dropped from the previous address.

As it stands now, names can be left on the list for years, leaving the door open for someone to fraudulently vote from the address or to identify himself or herself as someone else and vote. It is impossible to detect that sort of fraud through a computer review such as this one.

From the Jan. 25, 2005, editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
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Postcard protest just a partisan ploy

Voting fraud, felonies, prosecution! Newly minted state Rep. Robin Vos, R-Caledonia, was busy picking up the war cry of the Republican Party this week when it was revealed that Racine City Clerk Carolyn Moskonas hadn't been sending out postcards to verify voters who registered at the polls on election day last November.

Vos said he was "disappointed" that Racine wasn't doing everything it could to ensure fair and proper elections. Plus, Vos said, a public officer who intentionally fails or refuses to perform a mandatory duty can be charged with a felony and fined up to \$10,000 and jailed for six months.

Not only that, but if the cards come back undeliverable, the clerk is supposed to forward them to the district attorney for possible prosecution of voter fraud.

Yikes. That ought to put the fear of postcards in Moskonas.

Moskonas' defense was that her predecessor didn't do it and she didn't have money in her budget - \$1,500 to \$2,000 to mail and process the 4,000 same-day voter registrations last November.

Oops. Those don't add up to legally defensible reasons, and by week's end Mayor Gary Becker said the city will indeed send out postcards and comply with state law.

Among city clerks, Moskonas wasn't alone, of course. News reports indicated other counties don't send out the cards either, and more than a couple of district attorneys said they have never seen such cards or been asked to investigate them.

We particularly liked the response of the Richland Center Clerk who was quoted in a Milwaukee newspaper as saying the county doesn't send out cards because it would be "silly" since everyone knows everybody else. La Crosse, too, had a commonsense approach. If a card came back undeliverable, that voter was simply struck from the poll list.

Even as he acquiesced to following the state law, Mayor Gary Becker injected his own observation that "there are certain people that seem to want to make voting difficult for most people in some areas."

"My goal is to make sure that every individual who is eligible to vote and wants to vote is able to with as little inconvenience as possible," he added.

We don't doubt for an instant that some of those 4,000 postcards that are sent out will be undeliverable - despite the fact that each and every voter who registered at the poll had to produce an identification card or other identification such as a current bill mailed to their address to establish their voter eligibility. Lacking such I.D., they could vote if an established voter attested to their residency.

So all of those voters established their voter eligibility on election day.

But the fact is, too, that some voters, especially those on the low end of the income ladder, are more transient than others - they live in apartments or with relatives and not in a gated horse farm in Caledonia. They're more apt to move and, historically, they're more apt to vote Democratic - and that's why they're targeted by Vos and other Republicans.

These efforts aren't about fairness, they're about harassment and disenfranchisement. What other reason to make vague threats of felony prosecutions and push to send district attorney offices on address checks? The fact is that, despite the heated presidential election last November, more than a quarter of eligible voters didn't cast ballots - now that's really a crime.

Instead of chasing people off the poll lists for partisan advantage, we would urge Vos and other state Republicans to work to find ways to increase participation at the polls.

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Editorial: Widen election day focus

From the Journal Sentinel

Posted: Jan. 25, 2005

The Journal Sentinel has thoroughly reviewed Milwaukee records from the last presidential election and has pinpointed 1,200 voters with invalid addresses. That's fact. The debate is over what to make of it.

Republicans are quick to jump on discrepancies, real or imagined, in voting data in Milwaukee as proof of widespread fraud in the big city. In their minds, the Journal Sentinel's findings fit that pattern.

A more plausible explanation, however, is that the findings reflect the unfortunate tendency of voting systems throughout America to err. Milwaukee voters with dubious addresses made up four-tenths of 1% of the turnout, by the way. Nevertheless, the disclosures should give impetus to efforts to upgrade the electoral apparatus.

The errors must be corrected. But photo IDs, the cure-all pushed by Republicans, would cure hardly anything. What's more, the GOP's obsession with Milwaukee doesn't help. After all, electoral glitches pockmark the entire state. But Republicans are threatening to myopically focus only on Milwaukee. Any probe must widen to the entire state or at least big chunks of it.

Fat margins of error have long characterized the way the nation votes. We just didn't notice until the 2000 presidential election, when the photo finish came out blurry, prompting a national crisis. In close looks at voting elsewhere in the nation since, discrepancies almost seem the rule. It's no big surprise they show up in Milwaukee, too.

The good news is that city and state officials have already started the process of upgrading the voting system to reduce errors. The Journal Sentinel's investigation should prompt officials to particularly examine the breakdowns in the registration process, especially at the voting site.

Reporter Greg J. Borowski noted that three-quarters of voters with wrong addresses registered on site on election day. Yet, to register, you must show poll workers proof of residence, such as a recent utility bill, a lease, a driver's license. So how is it that the residences cannot be found of some voters who produced such proof?

Obvious clerical errors and illegible writing explain some of the discrepancy. Clearly, officials must come up with procedures to reduce those problems. New technology the state is planning should help. The technology would allow a city to check an address on a registration form against its official list of all addresses in the municipality. The ideal would be for a worker to be alerted to a dubious address at registration - an ideal that may be tough to reach.

Not likely to help is a photo ID requirement. A poll worker who transcribes the wrong address from a utility bill is just as likely to do so from a driver's license. What's more, the requirement would hurt people who lack such an ID (or forget theirs). Why erect an unnecessary obstacle to voting for even a tiny minority - among them, some newcomers to the state, some residents who don't drive and some young men and women just reaching voting age in the city? Keep in mind that 18-year-olds in the city are significantly less likely to hold driver's licenses than their suburban peers.

Suburban legislators lack empathy, unfortunately. One of them, Rep. Jeff Stone, a Greenfield Republican, is beating the drums for a probe of the Milwaukee elections. He has seized on the gap between the 84,000 people the city estimated registered on election day and the 73,000 cards it sent out to new registrants to verify their addresses. Indeed, in fixing the system, city officials must address that gap. But problems with the cards seem widespread in Wisconsin. What explains Stone's fixation on Milwaukee?

Republicans have not put forth actual cases of fraud - which would appear to be easy to do were it so rife here as the GOP insinuates.

The nation has learned that voting, which lies at the heart of our democracy, is a huge logistical challenge that America has yet to fully master. Milwaukee and Wisconsin are commendably taking steps to reduce the errors. The Journal Sentinel's findings should add impetus to that effort.

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NAACP finds election problems in suburbs

In 4 communities, vote totals for president outnumber voters

By **GEORGIA PABST** and **AMY RINARD**
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Posted: Feb. 2, 2005

On the eve of Thursday's hearing in Madison on a proposed voter ID requirement, the Milwaukee branch of the NAACP moved Wednesday to shift the spotlight from Milwaukee to highlighting election problems in several suburbs.

The group said its review of election data in those communities had found irregularities similar to those that have been reported in Milwaukee, such as more votes cast than voters on record in various wards.

Clerks in several of the communities acknowledged errors Wednesday.

In general, though, the problems are of a different nature and much smaller scope than those the Journal Sentinel has found in its extensive review of Milwaukee election records.

The Journal Sentinel found more than 1,200 votes in Milwaukee came from invalid addresses, including 186 votes from a list of questionable addresses the city had been warned about before the election.

That report prompted a criminal investigation into possible voter fraud to be opened last week by Milwaukee County District Attorney E. Michael McCann and U.S. Attorney Steve Biskupic.

In addition, the city was unable to process some 1,300 new registration cards because of incomplete information, such as missing names and addresses, and has had another 2,800 returned as undeliverable. Meanwhile, the Journal Sentinel also has found a gap of some 7,000 votes between the ballots counted in the city and the number of people listed as having voted.

In its review, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People looked at vote totals for some communities, comparing the number of people listed as voting in each ward or community to the total number of presidential ballots cast. The number of votes in a particular race should not top the total number of people who voted.

Nonetheless, the NAACP said it had found that situation in the towns of Oconomowoc and Vernon, the villages of Hartland, Lac La Belle and Pewaukee in Waukesha County and in several wards in Oak Creek in Milwaukee County.

"Yet Milwaukee is the only community where voters and election officials have been disparaged and accused of incompetence and criminal behavior," local NAACP President Jerry Ann Hamilton said at a news conference. "We are unaware of any ongoing election investigation in these communities. . . . It's unfair to single out Milwaukee."

Hamilton said she believes the voting problems in Milwaukee and elsewhere can be blamed on human error, not fraud. The group opposes the push to institute a photo ID requirement for all voters.

Milwaukee
Election Problems

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The state Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections will hold a hearing today on the bill, which was introduced Monday. It is expected to pass the Legislature and face a veto from Gov. Jim Doyle.

State Rep. Jeff Stone (R-Greendale), who has raised concerns about voting irregularities in Milwaukee, said he's not surprised the NAACP found problems elsewhere.

"I've never said this was a problem particular to Milwaukee," he said. "There's been a lot of discussion about Milwaukee because the numbers are larger." He noted he has been concerned about problems in the system since the 2000 presidential election.

No fraud seen

Henry Hamilton, of the NAACP's political action and legal redress committee, said that to date "not one scintilla of evidence has been found in Milwaukee to suggest the voting disparities are the result of fraud or criminal behavior." He is the son of Jerry Ann Hamilton.

The NAACP officials said they are concerned that Republicans now pushing the voter ID bill are motivated by politics. Henry Hamilton said the federal-local investigation into potential voter fraud should be dropped or expanded to include other communities.

In attempting to verify the NAACP's findings, the Journal Sentinel contacted municipal and county election officials in the six communities cited and also reviewed the official canvassed election results reported to the state Elections Board.

In four instances, the NAACP was correct: There were more votes recorded as being cast for president than there were actual voters.

In Oak Creek, for example, the official, canvassed election returns that Milwaukee County submitted to the state Elections Board show there were 2,611 voters in Wards 1, 2 and 3, but 2,670 votes cast for president.

Oak Creek City Clerk Beverly Buretta said she had "no idea" where the 2,670 number came from. The results sheet that Oak Creek turned in to the county Election Commission on election night showed that 2,608 votes were cast for president.

The county put the wrong number on its official canvas of votes that was submitted to the state, said Janice Dunn, head of the county Election Commission. She called it a "simple math error" and said she had notified the state Elections Board of that error.

In Waukesha County, the NAACP's inquiry prompted clerks in two communities - Hartland and Vernon - to discover they had made errors on election night in the forms sent to the county clerk's office and the state Elections Board.

In Hartland, the NAACP correctly found that 4,942 voted on election day, yet 4,979 votes were recorded as being cast for president. Village Clerk Connie Casper acknowledged a mistake was made and wasn't sure how it happened.

"I don't see any voter fraud here," Casper said. "Anyone can come and look at my tapes and my records and see that some idiot clerk made a mistake. I apologize to the voting constituency. I really don't know how I did what I did."

The NAACP also found that in the Town of Vernon, 4,769 people voted, yet 4,784 votes were recorded as being cast for president.

In two of the cases cited by the NAACP - the Town of Oconomowoc and the Village of Pewaukee - the NAACP's figures were incorrect.

In the Town of Oconomowoc, the NAACP said there were 5,044 voters on election day and 5,105 ballots cast for president. While the first number is correct, the number of votes casts for president in that community was 5,033, which is less than the total number of voters, according to county and state records.

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In the village of Pewaukee, the organization said that 4,733 people voted and 4,743 votes were cast for president. While the 4,733 figure is correct, state and county election records show that 4,707 votes were cast for president.

Greg J. Borowski, Stacy Forster and Dave Umhoefer of the Journal Sentinel staff contributed to this report.

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Double trouble in voter inquiry

Some duplicate voter records defy explanation

By **GREG J. BOROWSKI** and **TOM KERTSCHER**
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Posted: Feb. 8, 2005

If Milwaukee election records are correct, someone named Marquis F. Murff registered at the polls Nov. 2 and voted from an address on E. Knapp St.

Trouble is, the address is home to St. Catherine Residence, which has allowed only women to live there for 110 years.

Indeed, city records show that someone with an identical name and middle initial also registered at the polls that day and voted from 1503 N. Franklin Place. That address does not exist.

And though driver's license records put a Marquis F. Murff next door at 1505 N. Franklin Place, his name isn't on a directory of residents at that apartment building and messages left by the Journal Sentinel at that apartment went unanswered.

The case of Marquis F. Murff is one of many peculiarities, inconsistencies, duplications and plain unanswered questions found in recent days by the newspaper in its review of the election in the city.

The review has prompted a joint federal-local investigation into possible voter fraud and is complicated by flawed or incomplete city record keeping and new state limits on information that could be used to help identify potential duplicate voters.

When combined with the crush of voters that Mayor Tom Barrett says "overwhelmed" the system, it is difficult even three months later to identify potential voter fraud - and nearly impossible to rule it out.

The problems have become clear, though, underscored by case after case of unexplained duplicate voter listings - such as Marquis F. Murff - found by the newspaper.

There are college students listed as voting on campus and at home; people recorded as voting at old addresses and their new ones; identical names listed as registering at different addresses on election day; and even a woman who is listed as voting somewhere she says she never lived.

Barrett Chief of Staff Patrick Curley said such potential irregularities should be examined by authorities as part of their probe - and any fraudulent voters punished.

"This information has got to go to them," Curley said. "The rhyme or reason (for the problems) will be have to be sorted out by the investigators with the help of our staff."

The newspaper has found more than 1,200 votes cast from invalid addresses in the city, hundreds of cases where a computer "glitch" incorrectly caused voters to be listed twice and a 7,000-vote gap between the number of ballots counted and the number of people listed by the city as having voted.

Election Problems

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Reviews under way

The newspaper revelations prompted a joint investigation into possible fraud by Milwaukee County District Attorney E. Michael McCann and U.S. Attorney Steve Biskupic. Also, a state audit into problems here and in other cities could be OK'd today in Madison.

And a controversial Republican-sponsored measure that would require all voters to show a photo ID could be sent to the full Assembly today, though it faces a veto from Gov. Jim Doyle.

Chris Lato, a spokesman for the state Republican Party, said the cases of questionable voting discovered by the newspaper highlight the need for the ID requirement statewide.

"If people want to commit fraud, it's becoming more apparent that it's not too hard to pull off in this state," he said.

Opponents of the ID measure say, though, that it would make it too difficult for the poor, elderly and disabled to vote.

Democrat John Kerry topped President Bush in Wisconsin by about 11,300 votes, one of the narrowest margins in the nation. Had a larger state, such as Ohio, gone for Kerry, it could have led to a Florida-style recount in Wisconsin that could have turned on many of the votes that are in question now.

The fraud probe is focusing on some 1,300 same-day registration cards the city could not process because they were incomplete or had bad information, including hundreds with missing names or addresses.

The city has refused to grant the Journal Sentinel access to the cards despite earlier agreeing to and even requiring - and accepting - advance payment of copying charges in the paper's open records request.

City Attorney Grant Langley said the state open records law includes an exception for ongoing investigations. Investigators have asked the city not to release any copies of on-site registration cards, including the 1,300 that could not be processed and some 2,800 or more verification cards that were mailed and returned as undeliverable.

Voters difficult to track

Using computer records provided under an earlier request, the newspaper has attempted to track down dozens of cases from the 6,500 in which people with identical names and initials are listed as voting from different addresses.

Some are clearly two different people or have very common names. For example, six people named James L. Smith voted in November.

The newspaper took a sample of 300 people from that list, focusing on duplicate individuals with uncommon names. In most cases, public records checks easily confirmed that two different people were included on the list.

Some other duplications have been explained by the city as computer "glitches" from the post-election data-entry process, in which people were incorrectly assigned two votes.

But most of those cases have involved people who moved and registered at a new address, or already-registered voters who - for whatever reason - reregistered at the same address.

In at least 40 cases, though, the Journal Sentinel could not confirm an existence of an individual through public records. Reporters were then sent to the addresses and, in at least 10 of them, a wide range of inconsistencies emerged.

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There was Marquis F. Murff.

And there was Linda M. Chojnacki, who is listed as having voted from an address in the 1100 block of W. Montana St., where she says she has lived and voted for six years.

Records also list a Linda M. Chojnacki - one with the same birth date - as registering and voting from a house in the 2600 block of S. 7th St. Chojnacki, though, has never lived there and said she did not vote from that address.

After the 2000 election, the city included birth dates of voters with the information provided to the newspaper. In that race, no duplicate voters were found.

This time, under changes in state privacy laws, birth dates were withheld. Thus, it is difficult to determine if identical names represent the same people.

In the case of Chojnacki, city officials reviewed the complete record at the newspaper's request and found the same birth date was listed for the voter at both polling locations.

Hundreds of cases found by the newspaper have been explained by city officials as the result of a computer problem, but those generally involved people who had voted somewhere else in the past.

It seems unlikely the city computer would, as cards were entered, assign a random second address to a person.

Confusing records

In some cases, the newspaper found other public records that suggest the two votes represent two different people and data-entry errors are to blame.

For instance, Gloria Bell-Piphus is listed as having voted from a residence in the 5500 block of W. Roosevelt Drive. Records also show a Gloria Bell-Piphus as voting from the 2200 block of W. Burleigh St.

A woman located at the Burleigh address said her name is simply Gloria Bell, not Gloria Bell-Piphus. She said she voted in the November election.

The newspaper also was able to track down some people living at unlikely addresses, including a Midwest Airlines maintenance facility at Mitchell International Airport.

In that case, Philip J. Petersen said he is a representative for Rolls-Royce engines and is based there with the airline. He said at the time of the election he didn't have a permanent address and got his mail at the 555 W. Air Cargo Way facility. It was also the address on his driver's license.

"When I voted, this was considered my address more or less," Petersen said, adding he now has an address in Cudahy.

People can legally list their place of work as their voting address, as long as they vote only once, according to George Dunst, legal counsel to the state Elections Board.

The newspaper found other voters who registered from the Milwaukee Repertory Theater and even a carwash.

In other cases, though, extensive searches of public records, followed by repeated phone calls and door-knocking, turned up cases that leave as many questions as answers.

There was Nicholas J. Poethig, a Marquette University student listed by the city as voting from a campus address and his parents' home on W. Woodlawn Court. Poethig said he only voted once, using his parents' address.

And Nicole D. Spears, listed by the city as voting from an address in the 5800 block of N. 75th St., as well as her old address on W. Lynmar Trail. A woman at the 75th St. address said Spears voted only from that address, but used to live at the other.

There was Carrie S. Stotmeister, listed by the city as voting from her University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee address, where she registered as part of an on-campus registration drive. She is also listed as registering on election day and voting using her parents' address, on N. 53rd St. She said she voted only once, from that address.

And Tameia McNeill, listed as living at a home in the 2600 block of N. 47th St. and an apartment on W. Highland Blvd. In both cases, city records show on-site registrations, though McNeill says she voted using only the Highland Blvd. apartment address.

It is conceivable that in some of the cases cited, someone else fraudulently voted from the address instead of the person listed. Or that entries were recorded improperly by the city.

Some of the cases may be traced back to the computer problem officials blamed for problems. They have also cited "layer upon layer" of human error before and after the election.

The newspaper has identified many recordkeeping and computer flaws in the data. Those problems complicate any review of the election, since they translate into hundreds - even thousands - of incomplete or duplicate records. If those records are not corrected, they leave the door open for future fraud.

For instance, extra names and addresses are on the voter rolls and, since no ID is required at the polls, it would be easy for individuals to scam the system and vote from them in the future.

City officials have said they expect a new statewide voter list, which is to be up and running late this year, to solve some of the list problems.

They also have pledged to improve the election process. A task force appointed by Barrett has a second meeting scheduled for Friday.

Mike Johnson, Lawrence Sussman, Marie Rohde, Tom Held and Jesse Garza of the Journal Sentinel staff contributed to this report.

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Lawmakers want thorough audit of voting procedures

Associated Press

Lawmakers approved a state audit Wednesday to investigate voting procedures statewide and review reports of voter fraud in Milwaukee.

The bipartisan Joint Legislative Audit Committee voted 9-0 to order auditors to review new voter registration and address verification in Milwaukee as well as in a sample of five to 10 municipalities statewide to see whether state election laws were followed Nov. 2.

"There's anecdotal evidence coming from every corner of the state," Michael Pyritz, an aide to Rep. Jeff Stone, R-Greendale, told the committee.

Auditors also will look into how district attorneys responded to reports of voter fraud and why some address verification cards were returned as "undeliverable," among other problems.

The report is expected to be finished by fall, state auditor Janice Mueller said.

Stone and state Sen. Joe Liebham, R-Sheboygan, last month requested an audit of voter address verification cards submitted in Milwaukee for the presidential election.

The FBI, Milwaukee County District Attorney E. Michael McCann, U.S. Attorney Steven Biskupic and Milwaukee police all are investigating possible voter fraud in Milwaukee. The probe came after the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reviewed the city's voting records and found more than 1,200 votes on Nov. 2 came from invalid addresses.

Liebham and Stone said 84,000 same-day registrations were submitted, but more than 10,000 could not be confirmed by mail because of illegible or incomplete information.

A Wisconsin State Journal review last week found at least 438 Madison voters did not live where they said they lived when they registered at the polls on

Election Day, although it's not yet possible to know whether any of those people engaged in fraud or simply have moved since the election.

Voter registration cards for those people — sent out by the clerk's office after the Nov. 2 election to confirm their addresses had been returned by the post office. In most cases, the post office had indicated a forwarding address. But the mailings are marked "return service requested" by the clerk's office, meaning they should be returned, not forwarded, if the person has moved. Some of the cards appeared to have been returned because the address didn't exist.

Milwaukee election officials have said 1,305 same-day voter registration cards couldn't be processed, including more than 500 without addresses and dozens without names, but they blame most of the problems on clerical errors. Mayor Tom Barrett also launched a task force to investigate.

Also Wednesday, the Journal Sentinel reported that election records show a man who voted Nov. 2 listed his address as St. Catherine Residence in Milwaukee, which has allowed only women residents for 110 years.

Records show someone with an identical name and middle initial also registered at the polls that day and voted from another address that does not exist. Driver's license records apparently list a man with that name living next door to the second address, but his name is not on a directory of residents at that apartment building.

One woman was listed as voting twice, once from an accurate address and once from an address where she said she has never lived.

The Assembly's Committee on Campaigns and Elections on Wednesday approved a measure requiring voters to show identification at polling places.

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Probe finds evidence of election fraud

By GREG J. BOROWSKI

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Posted: May 10, 2005

Investigators today said they had found evidence of fraud in the Nov. 2 election in the City of Milwaukee, including cases of felons voting illegally and people who voted twice.

They found more than 100 instances of suspected double-voting and more than 200 felons who voted improperly in the city.

They also found that at least six deputy registrars falsified 65 names in last year's voter registration drives, for which they were paid by the signature solicited. Authorities said there was no evidence those false names were used to cast ballots.

Widespread record-keeping failures will make it difficult to identify fraud and prosecute criminal cases, U.S. Attorney Steve Biskupic and Milwaukee County District Attorney E. Michael McCann said in a statement issued minutes before a 1 p.m. press conference.

The two are leading the federal-local investigation that was launched in the wake of [Journal Sentinel reports](#) about election irregularities.

No charges were announced today, but officials said that the investigation is continuing.

In its investigation, the Journal Sentinel has also found a 7,000-vote gap, with more ballots counted in the city than people recorded as voting. While city election officials blamed post-election date entry for the flaws, the newspaper found gaps existed at dozens of wards, with more votes counted than people tallied in log books. Another 1,300 same-day registration cards were processed even though they were incomplete, with many missing addresses and even names.

In addition, the newspaper identified 278 felons who illegally voted statewide, with the majority coming from within the city. In Wisconsin, felons can only vote if they are off probation and parole.

The actual number of illegal felon voters is likely far greater, since the newspaper could only analyze about 40% of those who voted statewide, because a change in state law bars access to voter birth dates.

The newspaper also identified numerous cases where the same person appears to have voted twice, though that analysis was hampered by major computer problems at the city that led to 300 or more cases where people are incorrectly listed as voting twice.

The newspaper's findings have also prompted a statewide audit of voting procedures. Republicans have cited the newspaper's reports in calling for reforms, including a photo ID requirement for voters. The photo ID measure passed the Legislature, but was vetoed by Gov. Jim Doyle.

Doyle, a Democrat, has issued his own package of election reforms, many of which target problems highlighted by the newspaper. Those have not been acted on by the Legislature, which has a task force looking into various reforms.

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett has appointed his own task force to review procedures. That group is expected to issue its report soon.

Election Investigation

Archived Coverage

 [Archive](#): Previous coverage of the investigation into Milwaukee's Nov. 2, 2004 election

This story will be updated online during the day and a complete version will appear in the Journal Sentinel Wednesday morning.

Original URL: <http://www.jsonline.com/news/metro/may05/324933.asp>

Inquiry finds evidence of fraud in election

Cast ballots outnumber voters by 4,609

By GREG J. BOROWSKI
gborowski@journalsentinel.com

Posted: May 10, 2005

Investigators said Tuesday they found clear evidence of fraud in the Nov. 2 election in Milwaukee, including more than 200 cases of felons voting illegally and more than 100 people who voted twice, used fake names or false addresses or voted in the name of a dead person.

Officials said charges will be filed in coming weeks, as individual cases are reviewed and more evidence is gathered.

Nonetheless, it is likely that many - perhaps most - of those who committed fraud won't face prosecution because city records are so sloppy that it will be difficult to establish cases that will stand up in court.

And even now, three months after the investigation, officials have not been able to close a gap of 7,000 votes, with more ballots cast than voters listed. Officials said the gap remains at 4,609.

U.S. Attorney Steve Biskupic likened it to trying to prove "a bank embezzlement if the bank cannot tell how much money was there in the first place."

Biskupic announced the preliminary findings at a news conference, along with Milwaukee County District Attorney E. Michael McCann, who is also overseeing the joint inquiry.

Tuesday's announcement comes after a Journal Sentinel investigation that found widespread problems with the election in the city, including that the election totals themselves were not double-checked by city and county panels charged with doing so.

Some of the problems identified by the newspaper, such as spotty compliance with procedures to verify same-day registrants, are broader and are the subject of a statewide audit approved by lawmakers.

Tuesday's announcement could breathe new life into the Republican-backed photo ID debate, which did not survive a veto from Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle and might instead eventually go to voters as a proposed constitutional amendment.

A photo ID requirement might have caught some of the problems highlighted in Tuesday's preliminary report. It notes cases of people voting in the name of a dead person or as someone else. Investigators located some people listed as voting who said they did not vote.

In other cases, according to Tuesday's report, people "registered and voted with identities and addresses that cannot in any way be linked to a real person."

Officials did not identify how many fit each category.

Election Investigation



Photo/Karen Sherlock

U.S. Attorney Steven M. Biskupic (left), with Milwaukee County District Attorney E. Michael McCann, delivers the preliminary findings of a task force examining possible election fraud at the Federal Courthouse on Tuesday

Preliminary Findings

More than 200 felons voted illegally, while still on probation or parole. Although the cases will be hard to prosecute, investigators are now looking at Milwaukee suburbs for similar problems.

More than 100 people voted twice or used false addresses, fake names or voted as a dead person. Charges will be filed against

Investigators have focused only on the City of Milwaukee in reviewing duplicate-voting offenses. Officials said Tuesday, though, that they would expand the review of felons voting illegally to Milwaukee suburbs.

The newspaper found at least 278 felons who voted statewide, though only a partial review could be completed because of a state law that bars public access to birthdates of voters.

Tracking illegal votes

The fraud investigation has focused on the more than 70,000 people who registered to vote on election day, not the other 200,000-plus voters. That is because registration cards provide a paper trail, which officials said would be stronger in court than computerized records.

It is unclear what identification these 100-plus people provided at the polls to register. State law allows utility bills and leases to be used or for one voter to vouch for another.

Biskupic, appointed by a Republican, and McCann, a Democrat, said they had pledged to avoid partisanship in the matter and avoided questions relating to reforms and proposals.

The announcement, though, prompted renewed calls for photo ID from Republicans, while Doyle pushed again for his set of reforms, which he said would do more to tackle specific problems.

For instance, investigators found "deputy registrars" working for registration drives had submitted at least 65 fake names, though no one apparently voted from the addresses. Doyle's plan would prohibit offering financial incentives, such as paying by the signature, in such drives.

In Madison, Doyle said a photo ID requirement is unnecessary. He urged prosecution of any offenders.

"I don't think many people, if they know there are real consequences for voting twice, and that there have been prosecutions for voting twice, are going to do it because the risk of being caught and the penalty far outweighs the advantage of casting one extra vote," Doyle said.

In response to the findings, Sen. Joe Leibham (R-Sheboygan) said as early as next month he would advance a bill similar to the one vetoed by Doyle. It also could be part of the recommendations from a Legislative Council task force that has been meeting on reforms.

While Doyle has argued the measure would make Wisconsin one of the strictest states in the nation, very few other states allow same-day registration.

Assembly Speaker John Gard (R-Peshtigo) said if Doyle again vetoes the requirement, he would move to make it part of the state constitution, a two-year process that requires a statewide referendum but does not require the approval of the governor.

"The next presidential election in Wisconsin, I guarantee you'll need a photo ID to vote," said Gard, who is running for the U.S. House. "I'll get this done if it is the last thing I do around here."

U.S. Rep. Mark Green, a Green Bay Republican who has introduced a national photo ID requirement, said: "People are having their faith in the election system shaken. This news will make it much, much worse."

Green is running for governor, as is Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker, who also backs a photo ID requirement.

"Clearly, there is proof that fraud took place in the November 2 election," Walker said.

some of these people.

■ 4,609 more ballots were cast than voters listed.

■ Investigators have not been able to locate about 100 same-day registration cards.

By The Numbers

1,000

Minimum of hours logged by investigators from the FBI and Milwaukee Police Department reviewing the 70,000 same-day registration cards. This was required because of sloppy record-keeping by the city.

1,300

Cards that could not be processed because of missing names, addresses and other information.

Photo ID Debate

Should the state adopt a photo ID requirement for voting?

Yes

No

VOTE

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Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett attended the news conference, an unusual occurrence for an announcement by prosecutors.

From the start, Barrett said he welcomed the inquiry but also noted at several points in recent months that he had seen no hard evidence of fraud in the system.

He acknowledged Tuesday the findings pointed to fraud and said again "any individual who committed fraud (should) be prosecuted."

Asked if a photo ID requirement would have made a difference, he said it would not have prevented felons from voting and would have had little impact on other problems.

Biskupic said there was no indication of a widespread conspiracy to commit voter fraud, or of any knowledge or involvement by poll workers or any other city officials.

The city's record-keeping problems meant investigators from the FBI and Milwaukee Police Department have logged more than 1,000 hours reviewing the 70,000 same-day registration cards, including 1,300 that could not be processed because of missing names, addresses and other information.

Indeed, about 100 cards described as "of interest to investigators" cannot be located, officials said. And within the past few weeks, police found a previously lost box of the cards at the Election Commission offices.

Biskupic and McCann said they remain troubled that three months after the investigation began that city officials have been unable to account for a gap of about 4,600 votes, with more ballots counted than people listed as voting.

That reflects a new assessment of the 7,000-vote gap first identified by the Journal Sentinel. Although city election officials initially blamed postelection data entry for the flaws, the newspaper found gaps existed at dozens of wards, with more votes counted than people tallied in log books.

The gap has been narrowed to 4,600 by a closer review of election day logs and other records, which authorities placed off-limits to the newspaper during the investigation.

McCann said: "I will not be satisfied if we cannot uncover that - what the explanation is, or a reasonable explanation."

In all, about 277,000 people in Milwaukee voted in the election. Thus, the cases identified in the investigation constitute a small portion of the total vote.

The findings, however, carry extra significance in a state that had an 11,000-vote margin in the presidential contest, one of the closest in the nation.

Democrat John Kerry topped President Bush in Wisconsin, mainly because of Kerry's margin in Milwaukee and Madison.

Had a larger state, such as Ohio, gone the other way, it could have led to a Florida-style recount here that would have turned on many of the issues that instead were left for the newspaper to uncover in its extensive investigation.

The federal-local investigation was launched Jan. 26, a day after the Journal Sentinel reported that some 1,200 votes in the November election came from invalid addresses.

Among other findings, some 1,300 same-day registration cards were processed by poll workers who allowed people to vote even though the cards were incomplete. Some 548 had no address listed and 48 gave no name - yet the person was allowed to vote. Another 141 listed addresses outside the city.

The newspaper was denied access to those cards, on the recommendation of the city attorney's office, citing the inquiry.

Felons voted

Reviewing information it had access to, including a computerized list of people recorded as voting, the newspaper identified at least 278 felons who illegally voted statewide, though the vast majority came from within the city.

The real number is likely far higher because the newspaper was able to review only about 38% of the 2.98 million people who voted in the state because of the law that bars access to birth dates. The newspaper was able to link various databases and compare them to a state list of felons on probation or parole at the time of the election.

In response to the newspaper's reports, Doyle and many Republican lawmakers said that rule should be rescinded.

In Wisconsin, only felons who have completed probation or parole are allowed to vote.

Biskupic and McCann said these cases can be hard to prosecute, since it must be established that the felon knew he or she was not allowed to vote and voted anyway.

Thus it is unclear how many of the 200 felons investigators had identified will ultimately be charged.

The newspaper also identified numerous cases in Milwaukee where the same person appears to have voted twice, though that analysis was hampered by major computer problems at the city.

Those problems, which city officials labeled a "glitch," meant hundreds upon hundreds of cases where people are incorrectly listed as voting twice. These are in addition to cases of double voting identified by investigators.

The investigators have been focusing on 100-plus cases in this area. The cases take on many forms.

For instance, non-residents used non-existent city addresses to vote in Milwaukee. Officials are checking to see if they also voted elsewhere, such as from their actual address.

Officials indicated some of the fraud cases could be handled at the federal level because the election involved federal candidates, while other cases could involve state charges.

McCann and Biskupic asked anyone with information on possible fraud call the election task force at (414) 935-7802.

In March, Lisa Artison, a Barrett appointee, resigned as executive director of the Election Commission. She had been under fire for her handling of the election.

Sharon Robinson, head of the Department of Administration, has been overseeing the office and is chairing a city task force reviewing the election. Its report could be issued this month.

Patrick Marley of the Journal Sentinel staff contributed to this report.

From the May 11, 2005, editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
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Editorial: What's the fraud threshold?

From the Journal Sentinel

Posted: May 10, 2005

Some hard facts are emerging on the contentious issue of voter fraud in Milwaukee, thanks to the effort of a joint local-federal task force, which gave an interim report at a news conference Tuesday. Investigators have found widespread record-keeping glitches and spotty instances of fraud.

The former problem is of absolutely no surprise; the Journal Sentinel had documented it. But the puzzle was to what extent discrepancies in records reflected actual fraud. By methodically combing through records and interviewing voters, investigators are finally putting a handle on the fraud problem, about which many lawmakers and others had more opinions than facts.

Was the state Legislature right to pass a voter ID bill? Was Gov. Jim Doyle wrong to veto it? We said at the time that the Legislature was wrong and the governor was right - an opinion we still hold. Lawmakers had jumped the gun, prescribing a remedy for identification fraud before probes were completed into what extent it was a problem. And the legislative remedy was too extreme; Wisconsin would have had perhaps the most rigid identification requirement in the country.

We would favor tightening ID requirements if identification fraud is proven to be a significant problem. This local-federal task force - consisting of the Milwaukee police, the FBI, the Milwaukee County district attorney's office and the U.S. attorney's office and others - should give officials an idea of whether that threshold is reached as its investigation progresses. But any tightening should be more voter-friendly than what the Legislature passed.

The task force has developed evidence of more than 100 instances in which residents are suspected of voting twice or of using somebody else's name or a fake name to vote. It also found more than 200 felons who voted despite being barred from doing so.

The investigation is painstaking work, but the perpetrators of fraud deserve to be found, tried and punished, to safeguard the franchise. Still, making the case against felons is tough because prosecutors have to show that the ex-cons knew they were breaking the law.

Doyle has proposed a package of reforms, including procedures that would make it easier to keep felons from voting in the first place and to prosecute them should they vote anyway. Among other steps, residents who register the same day they vote would check a box that indicates felons still under the jurisdiction of the state Department of Corrections are ineligible to vote. Should a felon vote anyway, the district attorney could use the check as proof of foreknowledge of the crime.

Doyle's reforms would take care of another problem the task force identified: Some people who registered voters listed false names. The registrars were paid by the name - a practice Doyle would prohibit.

This task force is doing valuable work in better identifying the contours of the election problem - information policy-makers could use in fixing it. The investigation is also reinforcing the need for Doyle's reforms.

From the May 11, 2005, editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
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TheMilwaukeeChannel.com

Task Force Find More Ballots Cast Than Registered Voters

POSTED: 3:00 pm CDT May 10, 2005

MILWAUKEE -- A task force that was investigating possible voter fraud in Milwaukee released its findings Tuesday.

U.S. Attorney Steven Biskupic said investigators found more than 4,500 ballots were cast in Milwaukee than registered voters in the Nov. 2 election.

But he said they have not found any pattern of conspiracy to commit fraud.

Investigators also found more than 100 instances of suspected double-voting and more than 200 felons who voted improperly.

No one has been charged, but the investigation continues.

The Milwaukee County district attorney, the U.S. attorney and Milwaukee police joined the FBI in investigating reports of fake names and addresses for voters, double-voting and inaccurate voter registration lists on Election Day.

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Original URL: <http://www.jsonline.com/news/wauk/sep05/356998.asp>

Here's a vote for statewide system

Posted: Sept. 19, 2005

County Lines

Waukesha, my home, isn't Chicago, where - the saying goes - you can vote early and often.

Nor is it Cheers, the bar where everybody (including, presumably, every poll worker) knows your name.



Still, that there was even a single Waukesha person who may have voted twice last November means my vote might have been worth a teensy bit less. No fair.

Laurel Walker

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A newly released state Legislative Audit Bureau study of voter registration in Wisconsin surveyed clerks and sampled a handful of communities - from Eau Claire and Plover to Madison and Waukesha - confirming what a lot of people suspect: The state's patchwork voter registration system could be better. Reforms scheduled for next year should help.

Waukesha's slightly dishonorable mention in the audit included the possibility that one person voted twice and that felons also voted, which is not permitted if they've not finished their sentence, including probation and parole. District Attorney Paul Bucher said that seven of the nine felons cited in the audit report were convicted after the election.

Waukesha's list of nearly 40,000 voters also included dozens of dead and hundreds of duplicates, an open invitation for fraud. I'm not entirely sure any was committed, mind you, but it's clear that the possibility exists.

In the wake of the 2000 fiasco called a presidential election, the federal government is requiring a single statewide voter list controlled by the state come Jan. 1. Kevin Kennedy, executive director of the State Elections Board, told me Friday he's been pulling his hair out to shepherd the delayed project to completion.

Anyone who's seen big computer software programs promise more than can be delivered should be worried. But I guess the worst that can happen is we muddle along with the current system a little longer.

The job ought to be done right rather than just plain done, and there shouldn't be a federal financial penalty as the state tries to bring uniformity to this mishmash, which includes about 1,520 small municipalities that currently don't register voters or maintain lists.

Marie Bieber, Waukesha's deputy city clerk with election oversight, said that although Waukesha's weaknesses were identified in the audit, her office identifies thousands every four years who've moved or died or stopped voting or otherwise should be removed from the registration list. With state uniformity and help, they'll do better.

"I'm looking forward to it," she said about the new state system.

In Nashotah, with just under 1,000 voters, village clerk Cynthia Pfeifer said no registration is required but she keeps a list of names and addresses of people who vote.

In this Cheers-like community, Pfeifer said she just about knows everybody's name. Still, most voters prefer to show a driver's license, too. It's a good idea, she thinks, preventing the Chicago-style fraud she said her brother experienced a few years ago. When he showed up to vote, he told her, poll workers told him he already *had* voted.

But that's Chicago, not here.

The state audit report didn't find massive fraud in Wisconsin, just 105 instances of "voting irregularities" in the six municipalities sampled, some of which might be explainable - like Waukesha's seven post-election felons.

Still, the possibility exists. And the local clerks I talked to seem to agree that a uniform, statewide system would be good for everybody.

My vote, after all, ought to count for something - exactly the same as every other person's vote.

From the Sept. 20, 2005, editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
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Laurel Walker Archive

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Audit shows serious voter registration problems in state

No, uniform statewide process, bureau reports

By Richard Moore
The Lakeland Times

As the state struggles to implement a statewide voter registration system and a divisive debate continues over voter ID cards — the Legislature narrowly sustained last week Gov. Doyle's veto of an ID requirement — a new Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) report shows significant voter registration problems around the state.

Voter registration is required by statute in 172 municipalities with populations of more than 5,000, and locally in 167 smaller municipalities. Right now, 28.9 percent of the voting age population is not required to register before voting, though both federal and state law will require statewide registration beginning next year.

Some 20 percent of the state's electors register on Election Day, the report also found. Some GOP legislators are now authoring legislation to stop that practice.

In those municipalities where registration is required, the audit found significant problems.

For example, the audit stated, municipal clerks may appoint special registration deputies to assist with voter registration, but they are not required to track which individuals register through those deputies.

Some special registration deputies are municipal officials, the report added, but many work for interest groups or political parties, and problems were identified with registrations completed by some deputies, including inaccurate, illegible, and falsified registration forms.

Then, too, the audit continued, though address verification cards are the primary tool by which clerks detect improper registrations, only 42.7 percent of the municipalities surveyed sent cards to those registering by mail or at the polls, as required by statute, and 46 percent did not send any address verification cards at all.

Of those receiving cards, few both-ered to return them.

Because of inconsistencies, the audit stated, registration lists contain duplicate records as well as the names of ineligible individuals.

"For example, when we reviewed more than 348,000 electronic voter registration records from eight municipalities, we identified 3,116 records that appear to show individuals who are registered more than once in the same municipality," the report stated.

Among other survey findings, the report observed that only 85.3 percent of municipalities removed the names of inactive voters from their voter registration list and only 71.4 percent sometimes or always notified registered voters before removing their names.

The state's new computerized registration system should solve some of the prob-

lems, the report concluded, but Sen. Mary Lazich (R-New Berlin) said the study showed much more reform is needed.

"It will take nothing short of serious measures like a photo ID requirement, requiring disclosure by felons on registration forms, prohibiting compensation based on the number of voters registered, and penalties for clerks and poll workers who do not comply with election laws to restore credibility to a system that is no longer clean," Lazich said.

Lazich said the minimal return of address verification cards raised serious questions about authentic votes, and the whole report should be considered a cause for alarm.

Rep. Suzanne Jeskewitz (R-Menomonee Falls) and Sen. Carol Roessler (R-Oshkosh), co-chairpersons of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, both said they would follow up on the audit bureau's 11 specific recommendations to improve administration of the

voter registration process.

"We want to strictly adhere to the Legislative Audit Bureau's recommendations to eliminate statutory conflicts and provide uniform voter registration procedures training," Roessler said.

Jeskewitz said she was shocked by the lack of statewide standards.

"I was stunned to learn that our statutes do not set a clear statewide process regarding voter registration," Jeskewitz said. "Wisconsin is only one of six states that allows same day voter registration and when one-fifth of voters register on Election Day that is inviting additional problems for our poll workers and municipal clerks."

The audit was requested by Senator Joe Leibham (R-Sheboygan), Representative Jeff Stone (R-Greendale), and a number of other legislators and was prompted, in part, by reports of voting irregularities in the City of Milwaukee in the November 2004 elections.

Bonfire in Minocqua



The Minocqua Lions Club hosted a bonfire in Torpy Park on Wednesday for Lakeland Union High School students who participated in a number of Homecoming festivities last week.

— Raymond T. Rivard photo

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Young fraud in November not a problem in Madison

Nearly all suspect voters turn out to be people who moved or made innocent mistakes.

By Phil Erinkman
Wisconsin State Journal

John Hill really does exist. So do Katie Katz, Donald Schamun, James Kuehl, Janet Griesel, Sandra Angeli, John Amundson and Deb Spees.

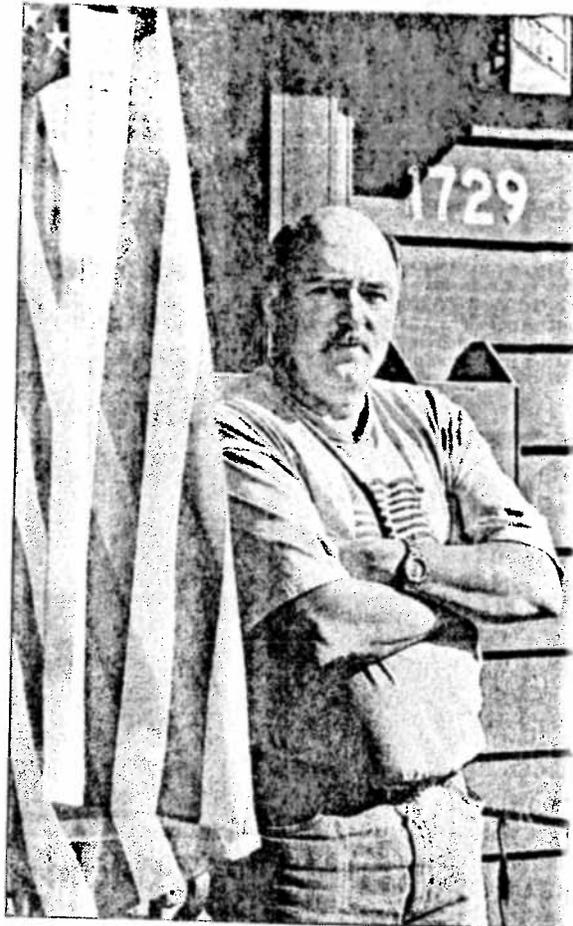
Brian Stoll is out there, along with Daniel Jay Lee and David Cimino. Angela Franzke moved; so did Nathan Greenawalt. Scott Lueck, Eric Snerman and Paul Sonntag. But they're real people.

In fact, if you took the time, you'd likely find the vast majority — if not all — of those once thought to be Election Day phantoms in Madison are living, breathing voters.

Authorities continue to investigate young irregularities in Milwaukee, including more than 100 cases of suspected double voting.

But in Madison, where 1,194 address verification cards sent to voters who registered on Election Day in November were returned as undeliverable, investigators now say only 16 may be problematic.

"The vast majority of them — almost all of them — on their face appear to be someone who moved between voting day and the time when these were mailed out," Dane County District Attorney Brian Blanchard said.



Joseph W. Jackson III — State Journal

John Hill, 1729 Capital Ave., can't explain why he got the ZIP code wrong on his voter registration form. The mistake pegged him as a potentially fraudulent voter when the post office sent back an address verification card after the election. "We were in a hurry, and there was quite a line of people," Hill said.

Please see **VOTING**, Page A9

◆ Evidence of voter fraud found in Milwaukee/A9

Voting

Continued from Page A1

Most of the others either wrote down the wrong ZIP code on their registration forms, forgot to include their apartment numbers in their address or inadvertently wrote down an old address. The post office likely could find the cards but election rules require the cards be returned if the address is incorrect or incomplete.

"It doesn't make me feel good," said John Hill, 55, an Army veteran and longtime Madison resident whose voter registration card was sent back to the Madison city clerk because he wrote his ZIP code as 53704 instead of 53705. "I know I didn't cheat, and I know it was all a big mistake. People just make too big a deal of the little things."

Innocent mistakes

Such innocent mistakes, which happened thousands of times around the state, have tended to amplify the far more serious — but much smaller number: — of likely fraudulent votes such as those announced Tuesday in Milwaukee. Identification advocates regularly cite the number of returned registration cards as evidence Wisconsin needs to require voters to show photo identification at the polls.

Opponents point out such a requirement would do little to stop most of the problems that have been identified, such as people writing down the wrong address or felons voting, and say it could disenfranchise some elderly or poor voters.

Supporters note the current system, in which registered voters need show no identification and new voters need only a utility bill or another registered voter to vouch for them, invites abuse.



Leah L. Jones - State Journal

"It kind of creeps me out," LeSpees said after a card verifying her address for voting purposes was returned as undeliverable. "I've been around for years, and they have no trouble finding me for taxes or anything else. It's just kind of annoying that when I go to vote they think I don't exist."

The GOP-led Legislature recently passed a bill requiring a photo ID to vote, but Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle vetoed it.

A hearing on a proposed state constitutional amendment requiring such identification (AJR 36) is planned for 10 a.m. Thursday in Room 300 North-east of the state Capitol.

At first glance, many of the verification cards that were returned suggested possible voter fraud: The addresses didn't exist, or the person on the card didn't live there.

One card, filled out by a John Amundson, gave an address of "6 S. Madison," not an actual residence. But Amundson is very real. The 45-year-old information technology manager actually lives at 6 S. Yellowstone Drive.

"Sounds like I spaced out the 'Yellowstone,'" Amundson said. "It certainly sounds like the kind of thing I could do."

A letter carrier couldn't find Janet Griesel at 710 Wheeler Road. That's because Griesel moved about two years ago to 710 Naevem Hill Drive from

1630 Wheeler Road. Her card mixed the two, creating an address that doesn't exist.

"My husband probably filled it out for me because I have a vision problem," Griesel said. "He was in a hurry to write his and mine, and I bet that's what he did. Unbelievable."

Katheryn Katz put down the address of her sorority house at 103 Langdon St. when she registered to vote Nov. 2 in her first presidential election. The city clerk sought to confirm her address in January, but by then she had moved to Seville, Spain, where the 21-year-old UW-Madison junior is studying Spanish politics and history.

Cheating can be risky

Kevin Kennedy, executive director of the state Elections Board, wasn't surprised at the low number of potential fraud cases in Madison. Defrauding the current system is easy but chancy, and the payoff of throwing a few votes toward one candidate probably isn't worth the risk of 4½ years in prison, he said.

Allegations of massive fraud, such as one person vouching for a busload of potential voters, are probably apocryphal, Kennedy said. Something like that would make an impression on poll workers, who haven't reported any such incidents, he said.

Voters can cheat the system. They can, for example, claim to be someone else. But that can be risky, Kennedy said, since it depends on the cheater knowing that the other person hasn't voted yet and that the poll worker doesn't know the person whose identity is being used.

To register as a fictional voter, the person would need to forge documents, such as utility bills, used to verify the person's address. Beginning in 2006, federal law also will require voters

to list their driver's license number or, if they don't have a driver's license, the last four digits of their Social Security number.

State Rep. Jeff Stone, D-Greendale, the lead sponsor of efforts in the Assembly to require photo ID at the polls, said the numbers from Madison suggest "a degree of accuracy the way the system functioned" unlike in Milwaukee.

But he maintained photo ID would improve the system further by allowing poll workers to make a positive identification of the voter, even if the address is outdated, incorrect or fraudulent.

Charges unlikely

In Madison, at least, the odds of such charges look exceedingly slim. If someone wanted to forge an identity and vote fraudulently, finding that person is probably next to impossible, Blanchard said.

Then, too, explanations for the 16 cards investigators have pulled out for further inquiry may prove to be as benign as the other 1,178.

On Tuesday, the Wisconsin State Journal found one of those voters, Brian Stoll. He and his wife live where they said they lived on their registration card, at 9921 Soaring Sky Run. But, while the property was recently annexed by Madison, the post office still considers it a Verona address and returned the card.

Stoll, 38, said he's used to such confusion over his address and was willing to overlook his brief tenure as a criminal suspect.

"As long as I didn't end up in jail and I can explain the circumstances, I guess it's OK," he said.

Contact Phil Brinkman at pbrinkman@madison.com or 252-6145.

Mayor Barrett op-ed

There is little doubt that the 2004 Presidential election was the most contentious election in recent memory. Hundreds of million of dollars were spent and thousands of people were engaged in the ground battle to win the White House.

Across the country, partisan emotions were running high. State and local governments experienced voter turnout that hadn't been seen in years. We were in the thick of it - a battle ground city in a battle ground state.

The enormity of the election, quite frankly, overwhelmed the City Election Commission's data systems and staff. The volume of pre-election registration cards and absentee ballots combined with the number of people registering and voting early at City Hall was stunning. Election day turn out was high. Thousands of people registered to vote at the polls. There were problems. Mistakes were made.

At the time of the election, I was in office just over six months. I didn't wait to tackle the issues. I said we had problems and they had to be fixed.

I have an internal task force that is taking a serious look at the City's election infrastructure - everything from data entry and staffing needs to the suitability of polling places. The task force will be working with state election officials, poll workers and observers, groups involved in voter registration and a host of others. Task force members include dedicated Milwaukeeans from the City Attorney's Office, the Comptroller's Office and the citizen chair of the Election Commission. We are united in our belief that Milwaukee must have a state-of-the-art and efficient election infrastructure. I want all of us to feel confident and secure about how our elections are run. I want systems in place that can manage an election with 80% voter turnout just as easily as it can manage an election with 8% voter turnout.

I want to ensure that the new state-wide voting list is operational and that Milwaukee receives the resources we need to upgrade our computer and data processing systems. Our current poll list is fraught with errors and must be purged. The State Elections Board will be responsible for implementing the new system and we look forward to working with them as we bring the new voter system on-line.

I want a complete and thorough review of pre-election voter registration and same day registration. The processing of pre-election registration cards is staff intensive. Time frames are tight and the quantity and quality of the cards are not controlled by the Election Commission.

Same day registration has to be improved. Staffing needs, updated lists, and post-election management of the cards are a few areas that I have asked the task force to review.

The City's 300 some polling places must be reviewed. Functionality and accessibility are issues that come up after most large turn-out elections.

The trend towards "early voting" is another area that must be addressed. Early voting is a national phenomenon that does not appear to be waning. To date, City Hall has been the only location for voters to come and vote early. Despite having three voting stations, we had long lines and Election Commission staff was spread thin. Alternatives must be looked at.

I am confident we can accomplish what we have set out to do. When I came into office, I faced a \$32 million dollar budget deficit. Plans for the Park East and Harley Museum were sitting idle. We took those issues head-on, passing a budget with a levy freeze and a drop in the tax rate and we successfully moved the development plans for Harley and the Park East. We will fix the Election Commission problems.

Regarding the allegations of voter fraud in Milwaukee - It's time to clear the air. I have personally spoken with the four principals involved in the voter fraud investigation - the District Attorney, the U.S. Attorney, the Milwaukee Police Chief and the new Director of the FBI's Milwaukee office. I told each of them that, "I welcome the investigation".

At the heart of our democracy is a citizen's right to vote. That right must be protected. Individuals who knowingly and willingly perpetrate election fraud violate the law and our fundamental democratic principles. Individuals involved in voting fraud should be prosecuted. At the same time, we should be careful and deliberate in how we, as a state, approach election law reform. Our democracy is dependent on citizens exercising their right to vote. The more people who participate in the process, the stronger our country is.

Unfortunately, since the November election we haven't seen or heard much about the good things that occurred. Over 270,000 Milwaukee voters went to the polls. The City had a dedicated and hard working election-day crew of close to 2,000 people. Many of these people have worked elections for years. They keep coming back and deserve our thanks. There were hundreds of election-day poll observers. These volunteers were organized by the major political parties and independent public interest groups. They watched everything from same day registrations to ballots being inserted into machines. Despite the fast and furious partisan snipping, Milwaukeeans were energized and engaged.

Isn't that what we want – lots of people exercising their right to vote, thousands of citizens involved in campaigns and election-day activities? That is something we should all be proud of, something we should never lose sight of and, something we should never discourage.



? What's the role of the Elections Board

1/20/05

Jan -

Could sample regis cards, but not just in M

↳ reasons cards in

↳ P.O. - reason for un

↳ use their numbers - not alot time

→ Waukesha, Brown Counties as well

① → draft a narrow scope to address Registration procedure, include registration cards
② → broader HAVA audit
↳ address verif.

↳ compliance

↳ all aspects of law don't take affect until Jan 2006

① - pick 5-10 other municipalities in addition to Milwaukee

- recommendations to improve process

- How Elections Board is monitoring this process

↳ chair role in this process

- Find out the numbers & the reasons

? Co-Chairs asked to audit, gave concerns, working on a scope → to Elections Board. → Take/approve by full committee

↳ Stone - met w/ Sharon ??? in Midw → Task Force,

cc letter to them

all over
Citizens, legis, voters of this State

cc members

- Discuss scope on Thurs.

Stone issue - Conversation w/ Jan, Joe + Sue 1/20 @ 9:50

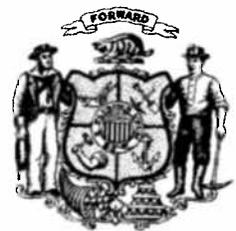
- asked Jeff to only tell press he's exploring
- 1850 municipalities out there
 - ↳ very partisan to only go to MdW
 - ↳ this is the work of the election Comms to count cards
 - ↳ can look at process of how they run their elections

Stone

- what happens in MdW is very important
 - integrity is important
- wants to sit down w/ Jan + Joe & discuss
 - if Jan still sick - call in → don't



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



2/9/05 - Audit Hearing 9-10:30?
Jan.

- Carol - role of the FBI in Midw. Conty.?
- Cullen - How many other municipalities?
 - 5 to 10 - depending upon - like to get a good mix urban-rural, north-south
- Cullen - Think authors think there is fraud - don't think you'll find it. If this is a witch hunt on Midw. need to do a larger sample if this isn't.
- Carol - ...
 - we are a reactionary body ... address real prob.
 - + there have been reported problems in Midw. - & others -
- ? We also have a Reg. Council committee ... never mind we can
- Kirkman - Elections can be decided on one vote
 - example of problems out state - not just Midw., hope some good recommendations out of this
- Miller - integrity of system important, hope in all it will prove ... Good to take a look. If we have prob we need to look at how to fix; what is rationale to set
 - ↳ a bit premature ... start up media accounts, talk w/ allian of cities - will cast a wide net.

- Sue - Do you follow up after election on verify
 - ↳ no, we respond to complaints, resource issue
 - ↳ may do it themselves after there is a stalund list - well look into it.
- Fitz - Do you think partisan primaries more susceptible to problems?
 - ↳ no, not really
- -look
- Foessler - legis to change age

1/27/05

- keep as procedural & process oriented
- will get tough questions at Audit Committee
- Don't want to duplicate effort
- Milwaukee can make it
 - ↳ Stone, Mayor & Lisa R. w/B - appears to be - willing to co-operate

- Monday @ 2:30, press conference - Assembly Chambers/Parlor

2/8th 2:00 or 4:00

See Chair

→ Notice out Monday - Noon

Signature

End of March
or May

Janet Swandberg

HAV

Title II monies

↳ 50% state match

↳ in finance appropri

Title I monies

- no state match

↳ on election admin, voting equip

- ① state voter list
- ② Disab access

\$ 43M title II monies
\$ 1.7M state funds

13.10 request

↳ to release

P20040624

P20050209

Ray
Jodie Nussbaum
Sarah Burhop