



NORTH CAROLINA

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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VIA EMAIL

Mr. Joe Coletti
House Majority Oversight Staff Director
North Carolina General Assembly
16 West Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

July 26, 2023

Dear Mr. Coletti,

Thank you for reaching out on behalf of the House Oversight and Reform Committee regarding follow-up questions and clarifications from my testimony to the committee on June 22, 2023. I have quoted the committee's questions below, followed by a response.

As an initial matter, I wanted to clarify my testimony in response to questions from Rep. McNeely regarding an estimate that a representative from the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) provided to the House Freedom Caucus concerning potentially outdated voter registration records. I reached out to ERIC's executive director to better understand what the organization was communicating to the caucus. He informed me that he provided an estimate to the caucus that around 600,000 voter registration records on North Carolina's voter rolls could potentially be inaccurate and could be updated using ERIC's data exchange services. My understanding is that the bulk of this population represents voters who may have moved within this state without updating their voter registration records. In other words, most of these would involve corrections to existing voter records, rather than removals of ineligible voters. An earlier version of this estimate, provided by ERIC to the State Board in 2021, is copied to this letter. This is a very rough estimate, based entirely on experience with other states that had joined ERIC in the past, accounting for our state's population difference with those other states. The estimate was not based on an analysis of North Carolina's actual voter rolls. It also did not take into account any differences between North Carolina's existing list maintenance practices and those of the states that joined ERIC in the past and were used for comparison purposes. It is possible, for example, that such other states did not engage in as many efforts to identify outdated voter registrations as North Carolina does, as explained in our [List Maintenance Policy](#). Regardless of how accurate this estimate is, however, this conversation highlights something our agency has long advocated for: joining ERIC would allow our state to much more effectively update the voter rolls and remove registrants who move out of or die in another state. There is no similar data exchange with dozens of states that would accomplish these goals.

1. *In your exchange with Rep. Chesser, it was not clear what prevents getting death records from the Social Security Administration. Could you provide further explanation on what shortcomings exist and on which side?*

Agency staff, in the past, conferred with a state that had engaged with the Social Security Administration previously and learned that getting data directly from that federal agency involves setting up a data feed and implementing various security procedures required by that federal agency to receive and store confidential federal data. That state explained that membership in ERIC is a much simpler way to get the same data without having to set up complex procedures for a direct data feed with the federal government, and in fact, that state switched to using ERIC to obtain this information. The General Assembly authorized ERIC membership in the 2021-2022 budget, so it appeared that the more efficient method of procuring federal death data was on the horizon. But given the delays and indications that the authorization to join ERIC may be revoked, State Board staff is currently gathering information from the Social Security Administration on the procedures and policies required to enter into an agreement for a direct data feed. Bear in mind, of course, that existing monthly data feeds from NC DHHS already ensure that county boards of elections have timely records of North Carolinians who die within the state. And the county boards remove such individuals from the voter rolls if they are registered. The benefit of ERIC's and the SSA's death data is that it includes North Carolinians who die in other states.

2. How frequently do court systems provide information to the boards of election when a potential juror is excused for citizenship or residency reasons?

We are not aware of an example of this ever occurring.

3. Do boards of elections compare voter lists with public assistance enrollment lists?

No. Under federal law, the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), public assistance agencies are required to offer the option to register to vote to persons who conduct transactions for public assistance services. *See* 52 U.S.C. § 20506. And those agencies are required to provide to the State Board the voter registration applications that are completed with their offices. However, there is no data exchange between the boards of elections and the public assistance agencies to compare the list of registered voters with the enrollees in benefit programs.

4. Has the State Board ever used a credit agency or other commercial data house to validate voter lists?

We are not aware of this occurring in this state or any others.¹ Generally speaking, the data that the boards of elections rely on to determine, systematically, whether registered voters remain eligible come from official, governmental sources.

5. You described limits on the ability to confirm addresses provided against county property records. Is it correct to say that addresses are attested and not audited?

No, not really. Whenever a person submits a voter registration application, the county board of elections sends a verification mailing to that voter at the address they provided. If that verification mailing is returned as undeliverable, a second verification mailing is sent. If that

¹ See <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/voter-registration-list-maintenance>.

second mailing is returned as undeliverable, the registration will not be processed. This is the procedure to initially confirm a registrant's address set forth in N.C.G.S. § 163-82.7.

Any other time an official mailing from the county board of elections is sent to a voter and is returned as undeliverable (e.g., for a polling place change, voting district change, etc.), that will trigger an address-confirmation mailing. A registrant must respond to such a mailing or else they will become inactive and will be removed from the voter rolls, after the board of elections waits through two federal elections, as required by federal law, to see if the voter confirms their address during that waiting period.

Additionally, twice per year, the State Board receives information from the Postal Service on people who have indicated to the Postal Service that their address has changed. The county boards use that information to send voters on that list an address-confirmation mailing, which triggers removal procedures as described above.

Then, after every statewide general election, the county boards conduct a mass mailing to confirm the addresses of voters who have had no contact with the board of elections during the prior two election cycles. Such voters are sent an address-confirmation mailing, which triggers removal procedures as described above.

On top of these procedures, every time a voter checks in to vote, they are required to sign and confirm their residential address under threat of felony punishment for false swearing.

Finally, voters are subject to challenges to their residency by any other voter in their county. If a voter has information that a fellow registrant used a false residence to register to vote, they may file a voter challenge under procedures set forth in state law. *See [Article 8 of Chapter 163](#).*

Furthermore, the State Board sends out weekly a geographic information system (GIS) audit that uses data provided by the North Carolina Geodetic Survey Office to flag potential errors or inconsistencies. The audit examines the addresses of registered voters that are in the State Election Information Management System (SEIMS) and compares it to the data from the North Carolina Geodetic Survey Office. The audit compares several items in relation to the addresses in SEIMS and in the Geodetic Survey data including: the precinct, the county, North Carolina State House District, North Carolina State Senate District, United States Congressional District, as well as superior court districts, and prosecutorial districts. Additionally, the audit checks for points that the Geodetic Survey Office data could not plot on the map. Audits for local jurisdictions are also available upon request by the county board of elections offices.

6. Could you provide analysis of SDR (new-only and total) ballots with verified and confirmed addresses, those with bad addresses, and the general population of voters for general elections in 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022? For this comparison, please provide distribution of voters in each group by precinct, county, election results, party choice, etc.

We are working to gather this data and should have this available to share by Friday, July 28th, with one caveat: the State Board has no means of distributing voters by "election results." Elections results, due to the secrecy of the ballot, are not tied to individual voters. For the

requested elections, the election results are broken down in various ways on our Election Results webpage: er.ncsbe.gov. If we have misunderstood this aspect of the request, please clarify and we can attempt to accommodate that request.

Thank you again,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Brinson Bell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karen Brinson Bell

Executive Director

North Carolina State Board of Elections

Estimates for North Carolina's first reports:

Category	Likely
In-state movers More recent activity in DMV record	392,000
Cross-state movers More recent registration or license in other state	162,000
Deceased Appears on national death index	16,000
In-state duplicates Duplicate voter records	15,000
TOTAL	585,000