



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND ETHICS
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MEDIA ADVISORY

D.C. BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND ETHICS
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Board of Elections and Ethics Releases List of Inactive Records Removed from Voter Registration List

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Board of Elections and Ethics today released a list of 93,773 inactive records that have been removed from its list of eligible voters as part of a comprehensive review of the voter registration database.

“None of these voters has cast a ballot in the District in at least eight years, nor responded to repeated notices from our office,” said Board spokesperson Alysoun McLaughlin. “In addition, our mail to each one of these individuals has been returned undeliverable from the U.S. Postal Service, suggesting that they no longer live at the address where they originally registered.”

The Board fulfilled all legal requirements of the National Voter Registration Act prior to removing these records from its voter registration list and no public notice of this action is required. However, the Board is publishing the list on its web site in an effort to encourage individuals whose names appear on the list to update their voter registration. “Since our mail to their last known address has been returned as undeliverable,” said McLaughlin, “we thought we would take this additional step and try to reach them using the Internet.”

The list, available online at www.dcoee.org, contains the names and addresses – along with the date of registration and the date that the voter last cast a ballot in the District – of previously registered voters who:

- Have not voted in any primary, special or general election in the District since at least 2002;
AND
- Have not responded to notices mailed after each general election in 2004, 2006 and 2008;
AND
- Have had no other contact with the Board of Elections and Ethics during that time, including any update of a voter registration record through the Department of Motor Vehicles or another District voter registration agency;
AND
- Have had notices to their address of residence returned to the Board of Elections and Ethics by the U.S. Postal Service as undeliverable.

This action has no effect on the voter registration statistics posted on the Board’s web site, nor on the lists of registered voters requested by candidates and other interested parties, because those lists do not include records marked as ‘inactive’. That designation is only applied in the District after a postcard, sent to all registered voters who do not cast a ballot in any general election, is

returned undeliverable by the U.S. Postal Service. Inactive records do, however, appear in the poll book on Election Day.

“The District has more registered voters than the Census Bureau estimate of our voting age population,” said Executive Director Rokey W. Suleman II, pointing out that the District has a highly mobile population and voters usually do not notify the Board when they move outside of the District. The voting age population of the District, according to the latest estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, is 485,621. There are currently 431,293 active registered voters in the District of Columbia and 59,367 voters remaining on the inactive list.

“This is a structural and nationwide problem,” said Suleman, who is engaged in discussions with other state election officials to improve sharing of information when a voter moves from one state to another. “We hope to compare our voter registration list with Maryland and Virginia before the next presidential election, and over time to share data with other states.”

“Ideally, we would like to move toward a system where eligible residents are automatically registered, not only when they interact with the DMV but also with other District agencies, and are automatically removed from our list whenever they register in another state,” said Suleman, who discussed the prospect of automatic registration in a May 5 report to the Council that appears on the Board’s website. “For now, however, we can only follow the law and our regulations to remove outdated records from our list.”

The Board’s regulations direct that any voter whose mail is returned undeliverable is to be deleted from the voter registration list if they do not cast a ballot and fail to respond to notices over the next two subsequent general elections for federal office. However, the Board does not entirely delete any record from its voter registration database. While records of individuals removed from the list of registered voters are marked as ‘deleted’ and do not appear in the poll book at precincts on Election Day, the record itself remains on file permanently and can be reinstated.

District residents are encouraged to register to vote or update their registration using the Board’s online tool at www.dcboee.org and to submit their completed voter registration application by mail by August 16, 2010. Between August 17 and August 30, residents can only register in person at the Board’s office. Once early voting begins on August 30 and at the polls on Election Day, residents can only register and cast a ballot if they bring with them a current photo ID, utility bill, bank statement, or government document listing their current address. Those individuals will be required to cast a special ballot, which will only be counted if the Board verifies that the voter meets all qualifications and has provided proper proof of residence.

The District of Columbia Board of Elections & Ethics is the independent agency of the District government responsible for the administration of elections, ballot access and voter registration.