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ACRU Election Integrity Bulletin

LEAD STORY

ACRU Focus: Legislators Not Shy in Pushing 'Model' Bills

The group that brought Tennessee the voter photo ID law could be on the brink of spawning another kink on the voting process, one that cross-checks jury service with voter rolls. At the behest of the American Civil Rights Union, legislators across the nation who belong to the American Legislative Exchange Council could be sponsoring bills in the next couple of years requiring local election commissions to take a closer look at people who miss jury duty. "All we want is honest voting," says Susan Carleson, chairman and CEO of the American Civil Rights Union, which put on a voter integrity seminar during the ALEC 2017 States & Nation Policy Summit held at Nashville's Omni Hotel. As a result, Sen. Bill Ketron, a state chairman for ALEC's public sector division, plans to ask Secretary of State Tre Hargett to come up with legislation mirroring the law in other states. He says he'll carry the bill.

<https://www.memphisdailynews.com/news/2017/dec/14/legislators-not-shy-in-pushing-model-bills/>

STATES

Florida: Experts: Broward's Elections Chief Broke Law in Destroying Ballots

The election supervisor in Florida's second-most populous county broke the law by destroying ballots cast in last year's congressional primary involving Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, according to election-law experts across the political spectrum. The congresswoman's opponent has sued to get access to the ballots. The case — one of three ongoing independent lawsuits plaguing Broward County Elections Supervisor Brenda Snipes' troubled office — stems from a June lawsuit filed in circuit court by Democrat Tim Canova. He had wanted to inspect the optical-scan ballots cast in his Aug. 30 primary race against Wasserman Schultz because he had concerns about the integrity of the elections office. Right before the general election, the Republican Party of Florida threatened to sue Snipes for the way in which her office handled the opening of absentee ballots. The matter was settled promptly, but the party filed a lawsuit this year to get a court order enforcing ballot-handling procedures. That case is ongoing. Meanwhile, Snipes is defending herself in another lawsuit over the way the office removes ineligible voters from the rolls. That case, filed in federal court in South Florida by the conservative American Civil Rights Union, alleges Broward had more registered voters than voting-age population. "They are the Keystone Kops of elections," said ACRU's lead attorney, J. Christian Adams. "It's complete incompetence."

<https://www.politico.com/states/florida/story/2017/12/15/experts-browards-elections-chief-broke-law-in-destroying-ballots-150258>



North Carolina: 12 Indicted in Alamance County for Voting as Felons

Police in North Carolina are seeking people accused of voting in the 2016 general election while still on felony probation or post-release supervision. A grand jury had indicted 12 people for violating state election laws. After elections, the State Board of Elections compares the state's voter registration database against the state Department of Public Safety's list of felons, and reviews voting history to determine if matches voted while still serving their sentence. The violation can carry a penalty of up to two years in prison. One man who was indicted, Anthony Leon Haith, turned himself in on Monday, but says no one told him he couldn't vote.

<http://www.wral.com/12-indicted-in-n-carolina-county-for-voting-as-felons/17187720/>

New York: Developers Sentenced to Prison for Voter Fraud

A federal judge sentenced Shalom Lamm to ten months in prison, a year of supervised release, 400 hours of community service and a \$20,000 fine, for his role in criminal conduct to fraudulently register voters for the March 2014 village election in tiny Bloomingburg, which sits on the border between Sullivan and Orange counties, but also within the Pine Bush School District. Lamm and his fellow conspirators were indicted December 15, 2016. The judge in Shalom Lamm's case was blunt in his summing up. "This was a brazen attempt to corrupt the electoral process for personal gain," he said, in describing the way that Lamm and Nakdimen worked to swing the village election in Bloomingburg. Lamm pled guilty in June to the charge of illegally registering voters for that election. Their effort failed, despite being, in Judge Vincent Bric-cetti's words, "an elaborate and carefully-orchestrated scheme to corrupt an election."

<http://www.shawangunkjournal.com/sj/171213/2168/shalom-lamm-sentenced-to-prison-for-voter-fraud.html>

Wisconsin: GOP Leaders of Legislature Calling for Ethics and Elections Commission Leaders to Resign

The fate of Wisconsin's Elections and Ethics commission administrators may come down to a highly unusual and dramatic vote in the state Senate. Both administrators have refused to heed the call from Republican legislative leaders to resign amid fallout from a report into the now-closed investigation into Gov. Scott Walker's campaign. Neither Elections administration Michael Haas nor Ethics administrator Brian Bell has been confirmed by the Senate. But both bipartisan boards have publicly backed them this week. Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald says if they don't resign, he will schedule a vote next month to reject their confirmation. The law is unclear on what such a vote would mean. But at the very least, it would increase pressure for them to resign or for the boards to take action to comply with the will of the Senate.

<http://www.nbc15.com/content/news/Legislative-leaders-call-for-Ethics-Elections-resignations-464389543.html>

West Virginia: New Voter ID Law Coming to the Mountain State

A new voter ID law will soon be going into effect in West Virginia. Beginning January 1, the state's new voter ID law will be going into effect. Those wishing to cast ballots will have to show identification at the polling place. People can use photo IDs, such as a driver's license, passport or government ID. You can also use non-photo identification, like a voter's registration card, a bank debit card or a utility bill. West Virginia Secretary of State, Mac Warner (R), said their office is trying to increase voter turnout. "Our team's effort has been to get as many people as possible as we can, registered to vote. The more people that participate in our process, the higher confidence we have that the officials we elect are the people that we want," Warner said.

<http://www.wvstv.com/west-virginia-news/new-voter-id-law-coming-to-the-mountain-state/881372467>

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REDISTRICTING

Supreme Court Agrees to Hear Maryland Redistricting Case

The Supreme Court said Friday that it will hear a challenge to Maryland's congressional districts brought by seven Republican voters who say the state's 2011 redistricting violated their First Amendment rights. In a case that has been watched closely by state political leaders and that has already been to the Supreme Court once before, the seven voters will now have an opportunity to bring their novel argument before the justices: that the redistricting amounted to a retaliation against them because of how they voted. The court heard a separate redistricting case in October filed by Wisconsin Democrats over that state's legislative districts that some believed could have bearing on the Maryland litigation. Taking the second case suggests that redistricting will feature even more prominently during the court's current term.

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/politics/blog/bs-md-redistricting-20171208-story.html>