



August 20, 2019

ACRU Election Integrity Bulletin

LEAD STORY

Breitbart: Project Veritas—Google Whistleblower Goes Public: ‘I Saw Something Dark and Nefarious Going On’

A Google whistleblower has gone public with claims of election manipulation and political bias, according to investigative journalism group Project Veritas, which posted a trove of over 950 documents provided by Google insider Zachary Vorhies, who says he has come forward because he “saw something dark and nefarious going on with the company and I realized that they were going to not only tamper with the elections, but use that tampering with the elections to essentially overthrow the United States.” Project Veritas has released yet another report about tech giant Google, this time a Google insider named Zachary Vorhies has gone public with claims that Google planned to tamper with U.S. elections. Vorhies turned over a trove of documents to Project Veritas and has reportedly given over 950 documents to the Department of Justice’s Antitrust division.

<https://www.breitbart.com/tech/2019/08/14/project-veritas-google-whistleblower-on-going-public-i-saw-something-dark-and-nefarious-going-on/>

NATIONAL

Maine Wire: Does Ranked-Choice Voting Live Up to Its Promises?

The Maine Heritage Policy Center today released its newest report, “A False Majority: The Failed Experiment of Ranked-Choice Voting.” The report explores the use of ranked-choice voting in jurisdictions throughout the country, including Maine, to determine if the voting system lives up to the claims made by proponents of the 2016 ballot initiative and 2018 People’s Veto. In the report, authors Adam Crepeau and Liam Sigaud examine data from 96 ranked-choice voting elections held throughout the U.S., where more than one round of tabulation was necessary to declare a winner and determine if the system in practice falls short of the bold claims made by its proponents. Despite promises that ranked-choice voting produces a majority winner, when a candidate fails to secure a majority of the votes cast in the first round and the race goes to additional rounds of tabulation, the eventual winner wins with a fake majority 61 percent of the time.

<https://www.themainewire.com/2019/08/does-ranked-choice-voting-live-up-to-its-promises/>

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Politico: Progressive Group Launches \$10 Million Online Voter Registration Drive

Citing an urgent need for young people and minorities to vote at higher rates in Southern states where Democrats are coveting wins in 2020, the progressive group ACRONYM is launching a \$10 million online drive to register voters in the South. ACRONYM's new program—which is being tested in Virginia's down-ballot elections—will target Arizona, Texas, Georgia and Florida. The group is aiming to register and mobilize more than 100,000 young and minority voters online, reaching them via Snapchat, Instagram and other digital platforms.

<https://www.politico.com/story/2019/08/14/progressive-online-voter-registration-drive-1461912>

Top U.S. Election Official Opposes Automatic Voter Registration

The chairwoman of the Election Assistance Commission told the nation's state legislators last week that she's opposed to automatic voter registration. Adding qualified citizens to the rolls whenever they do business with a state agency, unless they choose to opt out, has quickly become a widely accepted component of most democracy reform agendas. Eighteen states will have so-called AVR in place in time for the 2020 election after a surge of acceptance in state legislatures this decade. And the practice would be nationally mandated under HR 1, the comprehensive campaign finance, election and ethics legislation the House passed in March. But Christy McCormick argues that registering to vote is a form of speech protected by the First Amendment and that "not registering to vote is a choice—we should respect our citizens' choices."

<https://thefulcrum.us/automatic-voter-registration-2639823562>

STATES

California: 'Motor Voter' Mess Can't Be Excused Away

An audit of the state's automatic "motor voter" registration program released Friday shows problems with its implementation were even worse than previously thought. The accounting firm Ernst & Young found 83,684 duplicate voter registrations and 171,145 errors on individuals' political affiliation in state Department of Motor Vehicle records. The audit found that the "motor voter" program, created by law in 2015 and launched 16 months ago, was plagued by basic management errors. For one, there was no clear delineation of duties among the DMV, the Secretary of State's Office (which is in charge of voting in California) and the state Department of Technology. For another, DMV agents received so little training, they were left unable to answer basic questions from voters and prone to make mistakes in entering information into the voting database. Moreover, many problems identified soon after the program launched continued well into 2019.

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/editorials/story/2019-08-12/california-motor-voter-scandal-registrations-dmv>

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California: State May Lower the Voting Age to 17

The push to lower California's voting age from 18 to 17 passed a key legislative committee Wednesday and may go before the voters to decide. Assembly Constitutional Amendment 4 and Assembly Constitutional Amendment 8 both propose allowing a 17-year-old to vote. ACA 4 would allow them to vote in a primary or special election if they will turn 18 by the general election. ACA 8 would allow a 17-year-old to vote in all elections. Currently, Californians need to be 18 to vote in any election. If ACA 4 passes it would require voter approval in order to take effect. Currently, those who are 16 can register to vote. In 22 other states and the District of Columbia, a 17-year-old can vote in a primary if they will turn 18 before a general election. A similar Amendment proposed in California in 2017 did not advance. The 26th Amendment of the US Constitution grants voting rights to those 18 and older.

<https://sacramento.cbslocal.com/2019/08/15/california-may-lower-the-voting-age-to-17/>

Florida: Were Election Systems Online and Exposed? State Voting Supervisors Question Report

Several Florida elections supervisors are disputing a report by Vice News on Thursday that claimed their elections systems were susceptible to hacking because they were left online, possibly for months. The report, citing the work of a group of elections security experts, claimed seven Florida counties had exposed their systems. The six counties named in the story are Bradford, Charlotte, Flagler, Wakulla, Miami-Dade and Pasco. Researchers told Vice they were unable to identify the seventh county. But two of those counties, Miami-Dade and Wakulla, are disputing the report.

<https://www.bradenton.com/news/politics-government/state-politics/article233698107.html>

Georgia: Judge Denies Paper Ballots in Georgia This Year but Requires Them in 2020

A federal judge ruled Thursday that Georgia voters can cast ballots on the state's "unsecure, unreliable and grossly outdated" electronic voting machines one last time, deciding it would be too disruptive to switch to paper ballots before this fall's elections. But starting with next year's presidential primary election, paper ballots will be required, according to the ruling by U.S. District Judge Amy Totenberg. Her order barred the state from using its current electronic voting machines after this year's elections. Election officials are already planning to upgrade the state's voting system by buying \$107 million in new equipment that will use a combination of touchscreens and printed-out paper ballots to check the accuracy of election results.

<https://www.ajc.com/news/state--regional-govt--politics/judge-denies-paper-ballots-georgia-this-year-but-requires-them-2020/k3OeCITXuJ058FRfHWBQfO/>

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Illinois: “Very Badly Managed”: Inside Chicago Elections Officials’ Battle with Facebook

On October 20, 2018, just 16 days before that year’s midterm elections, Jim Allen, the spokesperson for the Chicago Board of Elections Commissioners, tried to boost a Facebook post on the board’s page announcing the opening of early-voting locations in the country’s sixth-largest elections jurisdiction.

Boosting a post effectively turns it into an advertisement, and he soon got notice that it would not be approved. He protested Facebook’s decision through an online support portal. The following morning, he was told the company had determined the attempted post would be an ad run by a page that wasn’t authorized to run ads “related to politics,” according to emails reviewed by Mother Jones. Allen was informed that in order to comply with Facebook’s policy on political advertising, his page would first have to register to pay for political ads, which would automatically attach a campaign-style “paid for” identifier to content the board wanted to boost. “For reasons that make absolutely no sense, Facebook is blocking the governmental agency in Chicago that is responsible for conducting elections from announcing the start of Early Voting, wrongly calling this political advertising,” Allen wrote back later that day. The following morning Allen was notified that Facebook had changed its mind and would in fact allow the boosted post, determining it was not a political advertisement under the company’s definition. The delay cost the Board about two days—and set Allen fuming.

<https://bit.ly/2P6YoY5>

Louisiana: Stacks of Voter Registration Cards Returned Undeliverable in Lafayette Parish

The Lafayette Parish Registrar of Voters Office is reminding residents about upcoming primary elections and voter registration deadlines. Anyone who has registered in the past and hasn’t moved will be able to vote during the general election on

October 12. If you have moved within the city, now is a good time to make sure your registration moved with you. In a social media post, the Lafayette Register of Voters shows an image of stacks of voter registration cards that were recently mailed out and then returned as undeliverable. An undelivered card usually means someone has either moved or passed away.

<https://bit.ly/2Mridar>

Michigan: Protect Election Integrity in Driver’s License Debate

Michigan officials are considering whether to offer driver’s licenses to undocumented immigrants, and while there may be valid safety reasons for doing so, the state must also ensure the integrity of its voter rolls. Critics say the legislation would reward lawbreakers and give those who are here illegally the same rights as legal residents. Rep. Jim Lower, R-Greenville, for example, pointed out in a statement that such a measure “would make our system more susceptible to voter fraud and abuse.” In addition, Lower said the measure “would send the wrong message to law abiding citizens and individuals who choose to follow the legal path to citizenship.”

<https://bit.ly/2ZbB0sl>

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New Jersey: Voters Who Asked for Mail-In Ballots in Last Two Elections Must Reapply, State Says

In a move that creates even more confusion with New Jersey election law, Gov. Phil Murphy's administration has decided that voters who requested vote-by-mail ballots in 2017 and 2018 must reapply to receive mail-in ballots for the upcoming election. A new law approved last year granted forever VBM status to any voter who previously requested mail-in ballots, unless they specifically opt out. With the exact language of the legislation up for interpretation, the state has determined that the new law applies only to VBM requests made in 2016 and before.

<https://bit.ly/33O3UCn>

Ohio: Secretary of State Touts Efforts to Update Voter Rolls

County Board of Elections, Ohio's Secretary of State touted his office's efforts to maintain accurate voter rolls while giving residents every chance to become or remain registered. State and federal law requires counties to maintain accurate voter rolls, Frank LaRose said during a brief meeting with board of elections officials and other county leaders. "The State of Ohio has a very specific process that's not optional," LaRose said. "When a registration becomes inactive for six years, meaning that ... the voter hasn't voted or carried out any other of a number of various other activities—they're mailed a notice after two years, and they're mailed another notice after four more years, which we call the last-chance notice. But then, after non-responsiveness to that, those registrations are required to be canceled." The last-chance notices make it clear that if the individual does not respond, the registration will be canceled, he said. Many notices come back to the board of elections marked "return to sender" because the person is deceased or moved long ago.

<https://www.bucyrustelegraphforum.com/story/news/2019/08/14/ohio-secretary-state-talks-efforts-update-voter-rolls/2006360001/>

REDISTRICTING

Redistricting by Commission: A Futile Effort to Take Political Considerations Out of Politics

In its recent *Rucho v. Common Cause* decision, the Supreme Court held that political gerrymandering claims do not belong in federal court. It reasoned that there was no generally applicable, clear, and politically neutral tests available for identifying when too much consideration had been given to politics in redistricting. That's necessary because, as the Supreme Court has said, redistricting is "unsurprisingly ... root-and-branch a matter of politics." Along the way, though, the Court also made it clear that it didn't like too much partisanship in redistricting. The majority observed that some states have addressed the issue in legislation or sought to defuse it by relying on redistricting commissions. All of the majority's rattling around is said to be without endorsement, but it is a recipe for mischief all the same. Redistricting by commission is thought to be a wonderful idea. In fact, it is nothing more than an attempt to depoliticize politics. It doesn't guarantee that the resulting plan won't be politically gerrymandered.

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/op-eds/redistricting-by-commission-a-futile-effort-to-take-political-considerations-out-of-politics>