



October 24, 2017

Chairman Gregg Harper
Committee on House Administration
2227 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Robert A. Brady
Committee on House Administration
2004 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady:

On behalf of Lawyers Democracy Fund, a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the role of ethics and legal professionalism in the electoral process, thank you for examining the important issue of state voter registration list maintenance at the Committee on House Administration's hearing tomorrow.

Accurate voter registration records are one of the most effective ways for states to protect the integrity of their elections and increase the confidence of voters in the election process.

In a society as mobile as ours, voters often find themselves registered in more than one state or locality. This can occur through lack of communication among state and local officials without fault by the voter. Dual registrations can render voters ineligible to vote or even subject them to investigation and false charges of vote fraud. In addition, a voter registration that exists for a person who is not an eligible voter, whether the person has moved, is deceased, does not exist, or is ineligible, presents an opportunity for identify theft and a fraudulent or mistaken vote to be cast with virtually no chance of being detected under current law. Errors in the voter registration rolls lead to long lines at the polls, requiring election judges to obtain the correct information to determine voter eligibility, thus inconveniencing voters who have taken the time to vote.

While some states and localities are beginning to take this problem seriously and improve the accuracy of these records, a tremendous amount of work remains to be done. Maintaining accurate records requires cooperation among different government agencies—state and local, state and federal, between the states, and between agencies within the same state.

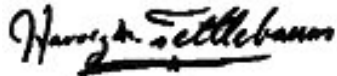
One of the most effective methods to ensure accurate voter registration records is interstate data sharing, which flags records that may be duplicates or otherwise ineligible for follow up by local election officials according to their existing processes for identifying and removing ineligible registrations.

Automatic voter registration, often touted as a way to improve voter registration list accuracy, may actually result in exactly the opposite since, where it currently exists, we are beginning to see registration of persons who are ineligible to vote for a variety of reasons. Another result has been to disenfranchise voters who wish to vote in party primaries.

An area where Congressional study and eventual action might be better directed is an examination of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 ("Motor Voter Act") and its provisions which impede states from removing from the state-wide voter database voters who are clearly ineligible to vote in their respective jurisdictions. We would be happy to work with the Committee to assist its staff to address these issues.

Voter registration list maintenance is a key to improving elections and we thank you for focusing on it tomorrow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harvey Tettlebaum". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent underline.

Harvey Tettlebaum
President, Lawyers Democracy Fund