

Addendum to December 2018 KY Voter

Recommendations on Voting and Election Finance Transparency

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At the October meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on State Government, recommendations were made to legislators for the 2019 legislative session that would improve voting and increase transparency in election financing.

The Secretary of State's Office is recommending:

- Removal of the required excuse for early voting.
- A change the online deadline for voter registration from 4:00 p.m. to 12 midnight 28 days before elections to accommodate the many online users who don't end their day at 4:00 p.m.
- Allowing emergency absentee voting for select groups such as firefighters who may be called away to work at the last minute.

Registry of Election Finance is suggesting:

- Mandatory electronic filing of election finance reports to bring transparency and fairness to that reporting. In 2018 over 7,000 people filed to run for office in Kentucky; 1,559 candidates were required to file because they raised over \$3,000; only 106 had filed online. Staff is not able to enter that vast amount of data in a timely fashion, resulting in uneven availability of campaign finance information for the public and a disadvantage to those who do file online.

The KY County Clerk's Association is asking that the legislature:

- Close the loop hole on changing party affiliation. After the Dec. 31 deadline, voters can legally unregister and then register again under a different party, avoiding the intent of the law.
- Allow email for absentee ballots; mail service is getting slower and even though ballots are mailed on time, they sometimes don't reach county clerks until after Election Day and they cannot be counted.
- Change the requirement for election officers to have not changed party affiliation for 18 months prior to serving to make it easier to find poll workers.
- Change the requirement for school board candidates to provide a school transcript and allow other documents to demonstrate high school graduation.

Other topics covered at this meeting included a discussion about the Secretary of State's Compliance with the Court-Ordered Consent Decree Requiring Kentucky to clean up election rolls. Background story here. <https://www.judicialwatch.org/press-room/press-releases/judicial-watch-victory-court-ordered-consent-decree-requires-kentucky-to-clean-up-election-rolls/>

Several legislators reported that while campaigning and walking their districts, they found multiple families registered to vote at a single address. People who had moved away were still registered at the address.

Secretary of State's director of communications, Bradford Queen, reported that maintaining/updating voting rolls is expensive and funds have not been available to do this work. The Secretary is working to comply with the decree. He reported:

1. Since 2012 close to half a million voters have been removed from voter rolls.
2. This year, postcards with return requests were mailed to all who have not voted in the last four election cycles and who have not been in contact about their registration. Those whose postcards have been returned will get a second post card with a forwarding address. If they do not respond, their names will be removed.
3. Death certificates are mailed to the Sec of State's office by the office of vital statistics so those names can be removed from the rolls.
4. KY will be working with the Pew's Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) and 27 other states to share voter registration information to avoid duplications.

Queen also reported that actual voter fraud is minimal in Kentucky. There are almost no cases of voter impersonation here or across the country.

Legislators commended the Secretary's office for the new online voter registration.

County Clerks from Jefferson, Trimble and Madison counties reported on use of new voting machines that provide paper trails and have NO internet connections. They believe this system is 100% secure.