

Republican Perspective

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by John Littig

Ghost Voters

Legend has it that Chicago's graveyard precincts gave John F. Kennedy the 1960 presidential election over Richard Nixon. Who knows? Probably an exaggeration. Regardless, there's apparently a Chicago-style get-out-the-vote effort going on right here in the Golden State.

An investigative reporter for CBS2 in Los Angeles compared California Secretary of State voting records with Social Security Administration death records. Surprise! He found that some of the dead were still politically active. He interviewed relatives of the deceased voters---confirming the SSA's assessment that the voters were, in fact, really departed.

CBS2 found that there were 215 deceased persons on the Los Angeles County voter rolls who were still voting. The deceased were persistent in exercising their suffrage---many voting in several consecutive elections. The reporter gave some examples: Julita Abutin died in 2006, but managed to vote in 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014. John Chenkner died in 2003, but exercised his franchise in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, and 2010. Another lady, who had died in 1988, voted 26 years later---in 2014!

CBS2 checked the Registrar's website in May 2016 and found that 212 of the 215 deceased voters were still registered. Thus they may have voted yet again in the recent June primary.

In case you are interested in political affiliation, deceased Democrat voters held a two-to-one edge over deceased Republicans. However, this is not much different from the ratio of registered Democrats-to-Republicans in the county. In addition, there's no way of knowing whether the deceased voters crossed party lines or remained true to their party of registration. So there's not much to be gleaned from the party affiliation of the deceased.

The problems in the 2000 presidential election in Florida inspired Congress to pass (and President Bush to sign) the Help America Vote Act of 2002. Among other provisions, the HAVA requires computerized, statewide voter registration systems and also requires regular use of those systems to eliminate ineligible voters.

CBS2 reports that "California is the only state that's still not compliant with the Act." The Public Interest Legal Foundation says "California has been the most derelict state in the country in implementing statewide databases as required

under federal law. They just blew it off for over a decade.”

Of course the impact of ghost voting is that each bogus vote cast cancels the valid vote of a legitimate California voter.

But CBS2 only explored the issue of deceased voters. Beyond that relatively small group, what other ineligible voters are on the rolls? What other connivances are at play? Probably voters who register in multiple jurisdictions, probably non-citizens, probably various other fraudulent schemes.

Not a problem? Well, consider: When any vote is cast by a decedent or otherwise ineligible voter, your own vote (or that of someone you know) has just been cancelled.