

Voter Registration Procedures

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION

The Grand Jury received complaint #95-15 regarding the possibility for fraudulent voter registration taking place in Ventura County. The complainant also asked that we review the election process in general.

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

The Grand Jury met with the County Registrar of Voters to discuss three specific issues:

- Voter identification for registration and voting.
- The "Motor Voter Registration" law.
- The maintenance of an accurate voter registration list.

FINDINGS

- The process of showing identification for registering to vote or to actually vote is governed by Federal and State laws and cannot be changed by the County.
- According to the Registrar, the "Motor Voter Registration" law appears to have some flaws in it. However, it is a Federal law that the Registrar's Office must comply with and they have shown a commitment to obey the law to the best of their ability.
- The Registrar of Voters has a comprehensive policy for maintaining an accurate list of voters in the County.
- Throughout the year, the Registrar removes persons from the list of active registered voters for the following reasons:
 - a. Any person convicted of a felony.
 - b. Any person show has died. A list of people who have died is provided to the Registrar by the County Health Department.
 - c. Any person who has moved out of the County. The Registrar purchases a list of persons who have changed address from a private firm that has previously obtained a list for the U.S. Post Office.
 - d. Any person who has not voted in the previous two general elections is moved to an inactive list but will still remain a registered voter.

The total number of registered voters in 1995 was 352,527. The number of newly registered voters added to the list in 1995 was 8,820. The numbers of voters removed from the list in 1995 was 6,832.

Among those registered voters removed:

- a. 3 were convicted of a felony in 1995.
- b. Approximately 1200 died in 1995.

- c. 5,624 moved out of the county in 1995.
- d. Approximately 25,000 had not voted in the two previous general elections and were placed on the inactive list.

The Grand Jury did a spot check of deceased persons, a resident who recently moved, and a convicted felon. All had previously been removed by the Registrar for the applicable reason.

- The Grand Jury's investigation revealed no evidence of fraudulent voter registration taking place in Ventura County. The Registrar's Office is very efficiently run. In a matter of moments, it is possible to discover the status of any voter. The updating of the list of active registered voters is sometimes delayed since it depends on when the Registrar receives notice from various sources.
- Despite recent staff and budget cuts, the Registrar should be commended for maintaining an operation that performs all that State and Federal laws require in a timely and accurate manner.

COMMENDATIONS

The 1995/96 Grand Jury is satisfied with the County voting procedures and is not making any recommendations at this time.