

SOS: Coding issues to blame for errors in online voter history records - The Nevada Independent

Officials said they fixed coding errors that created problems with the state's online voting records, primary election results not affected.



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Cisco Aguilar, candidate for Nevada secretary of state, during a candidate forum in Pahrump on Thursday, Aug. 25, 2022. (Jeff Scheid/Nevada Independent)

This story has been translated to Spanish. You can [read it here](#).

The Nevada Secretary of State's office announced it had fixed coding errors in files used to provide nightly updates on voter registration history that led to misreported records.

In a statement issued by the office early Monday evening, officials said that some of the steps county workers are required to file in the system "were not taken, resulting in inaccurate data" and re-emphasized that the errors did not affect the results of the presidential primary election.

Specifically, officials explained that every county uploads its voter registration data to the secretary of state's database each night. The secretary of state's office then executes code to create a single voter registration file that users see when they log into the website.

Officials said the legacy systems used by counties require additional steps to ensure voters who did not return a ballot or vote are indicated as such — additional steps that were not taken, resulting in inaccurate data.

"This is an error that relates to the code used for when a voter is sent a mail ballot and does not return it; it has no connection in any way to vote tabulation," Spokeswoman Cecilia Heston said in an emailed statement Monday evening.

Heston reiterated that vote history is generated separately from election results, and the results on [the state's election website](#) and county canvasses of the votes are "unaffected and accurate."

The issues arrived as the state is moving to a new [top-down centralized Voter Registration and Election Management System \(VREMS\)](#) instead of a bottom-up system where individual counties report to the state, a change Aguilar has said is vital.

"We need to have that [top-down system] in place by 2024 because it leads to other efficiencies in the flow and process of elections," Aguilar [said in an interview last year](#).

Heston said the registration and election management system will go live before the June 2024 election, "and remove the need for these outdated processes."

Data from the secretary of state's website [indicates](#) the Democratic and Republican presidential primaries saw record-high turnout, with more than 133,000 votes cast in the Democratic primary, representing a nearly 63 percent turnout for the party, and more than 79,000 in the Republican primary, or a 37 percent turnout rate.

Congressional District 3 candidate Elizabeth Helgelien [posted on X, formerly Twitter](#), that the problem is evidence of fraud taking place in Nevada, but did not explain how the issue constituted voter fraud.

Shortly after the news broke about the technical issues, the Nevada GOP [issued a statement](#) noting the party had received complaints from people who did not vote in the primary but received notification that their mail ballots were counted. The party said it would investigate "alleged irregularities in mail-in ballot counting" and is communicating with the secretary of state's office.

"These reports have raised serious questions about the security of the complex process of tabulating mail-in ballots in Nevada that needs to be addressed prior to the June Primary and November General Election," the party wrote.

In a [social media post](#), Gov. Joe Lombardo took a different approach from his party. He reassured voters that the voter history glitch does not affect vote tabulation and that the secretary of state's office is "working diligently to resolve the issue with their website."

Secretary of State Cisco Aguilar and Attorney General Aaron Ford, who are Democrats, have reiterated that Nevada's election processes are secure and that there are [safeguards](#) in place to prevent voter fraud, including procedures to investigate reports of potential voter fraud.

"Our state runs some of the most accessible, secure elections in the country," Aguilar said in a [January press conference](#) ahead of the primary.

Updated at 10:45 a.m., 11:08 a.m., 1:52 p.m., 6:15 p.m. and 6:25 p.m. on 2/19/24 to add the source of the issue from the secretary of state's office, context from election administrators about election security, a statement from the Nevada GOP and a response from the governor.

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- Cecilia Heston - \$150



Tabitha Mueller

Tabitha Mueller is a staff reporter whose coverage areas include state elections, COVID-19, housing and the Legislature.

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