Emails: Rhode Island Solicited Voter Registration From Noncitizens

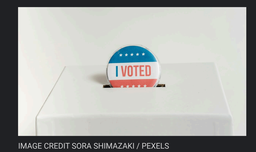

IMAGE CREDIT SORA SHIMAZAKI / PEXELS

The Rhode Island Department of State solicited potential noncitizens to register to vote in order to meet the requirements of the leftist election group Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), according to emails reviewed by The Federalist.

In a 2021 email thread, Rob Rock, the Department of State's former director of elections (who now serves as deputy secretary and director of administration), said the state sent "eligible but unregistered" (EBU) voter mailers to individuals flagged as noncitizens. The email was sent in response to an inquiry from Kyle Upchurch, program manager at the Zuckbucks-linked Center for Election Innovation & Research (CEIR).

"We sent two versions of the EBU," Rock wrote. "One to people who have a 'Y' citizenship flag and one to those who have a 'No' citizenship flag. Each PDF contains the English and Spanish versions."

While the mailers said that an individual would have to be a citizen to register to vote, they were sent to citizens and noncitizens alike, targeting those who were flagged as noncitizens. In a statement to The Federalist, Department of State Director of Communications and Public Affairs Faith Chybowski said the purpose is to target those who may be newly naturalized citizens whose citizenship status has changed and therefore would be eligible to vote.

"Our records show that you have not been eligible to vote due to your U.S. citizenship status," the mailer, provided by the department, reads. "If your status has changed recently, you may now be eligible to vote."

However, the department simultaneously maintains that "it is a felony for a non-U.S. citizen to be registered to vote" and that it "cannot ask for proof of citizenship under law" when individuals register to vote. To support the latter claim, the office cited a 2013 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that Arizona could not require documentary proof of citizenship (DPOC) on a federal voter registration form without approval from the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) and subsequent left-wing litigation against the EAC for allowing certain states to require DPOC.

Registering to vote in Rhode Island, Chybowski explained, merely "requires an attestation that the signer is a citizen."

The inconsistency has election integrity advocates concerned about how Rhode Island would be able to know if noncitizens are registering, particularly in light of the numerous examples of noncitizens making their way onto voter rolls.

Sending the EBU mailers is a requirement of membership in the left-wing, multi-state voter roll "management" system Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), which also has ties to Zuckbucks and its "hardcore leftist" founder David Becker (also the founder and current executive director of CEIR).

"ERIC was established to clean up the voter rolls in member states. However, the member agreement only mandates adding voters,[] not removing them," Ned Jones, director of the Citizens Election Research Center at the Election Integrity Network, a project of the Virginia Institute for Public Policy, told The Federalist. "Member states send ERIC a list of anyone who interact[s] with the DMV, both citizens and non-citizens. ERIC shares the information with CEIR and sends the state a list of EBUs to contact, with voter registration information."

"This list includes non-citizens as revealed in the Rhode Island emails and the mass mailing to 30,000 non-citizens by the Secretary of State in Colorado," added Jones, whose organization obtained the emails through an open records request. "Under the ERIC agreement member states may be registering non-citizens."

Even though Democrats and their allies in the corporate media maintain that noncitizens are not voting (and even if they do it is "vanishingly rare," leftists argue), the Biden-Harris Department of Justice is currently suing the Commonwealth of Virginia for removing roughly 6,300 noncitizens from its voter rolls in an attempt to ensure those individuals are still registered.

It is unclear how many individuals flagged as noncitizens received EBU mailers from Rhode Island, but the Department of State told The Federalist that it "takes voter list maintenance seriously." According to statistics offered by the department, 147,997 voters have been removed from the rolls since 2020.

While removals are determined by information like state DMV data, Department of Corrections reports, and death reports from the Department of Health, they are also informed by ERIC-provided list maintenance services, including those for which the state provides data.

As The Federalist has reported, ERIC is an extremely problematic organization for states to be partnering with if the ultimate goal is to conduct voter roll maintenance in a fair, nonpartisan way.

The group was founded by Becker, who just this year was attempting to convince Americans to ignore the issue of noncitizen voting. Becker was also a lobbyist for the George Soros dark money-funded People for the American Way, infamous for its "Right Wing Watch," a project aimed at attacking conservatives. As an attorney at the Justice Department, Becker was labeled by his colleagues a "hard-core leftist" and someone who "couldn't stand conservatives."

Among other problems with ERIC, the group also partnered with CEIR, one of two far-left organizations that distributed part of the $419 million from Mark Zuckerberg's election-meddling scheme, which privatized elections and tipped the scales in favor of Democrats in 2020.

ERIC has also helped left-wing organizations like CEIR use state funds to register likely Democrat voters and increase voter turnout in deep blue areas. As the Washington Examiner reported, "an organization like CEIR can be sent voter data by ERIC and procure mailing lists for citizens who they would like to be contacted for voter registration solicitation … and that list will be sent back to the state. Membership in ERIC requires that the state send out those mailers using taxpayer dollars."

Because of the partisan activism of ERIC, multiple states have left the organization in recent years.

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