

# NEW JERSEY REPUBLICAN STATE COMMITTEE

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June 22, 2020

Hon. Craig Carpenito  
United States Attorney  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Peter W. Rodino, Jr. Federal Building  
970 Broad St, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Newark, NJ 07102

Dear Mr. Carpenito,

Please accept this request for federal monitoring of the statewide New Jersey Primary Election, scheduled for on July 7, 2020.

The basis of this request is the overwhelming number of reports from nearly every corner of the state that indicate Governor Murphy's switch to an all mail Primary Election was ill considered and poorly executed to a degree that risks disenfranchisement. These examples come from the May 12, 2020 municipal elections, and the first several weeks of mail voting for the July 7 primary. A non-exhaustive summary of the concerns includes:

- Massive voter fraud in Paterson, including but not limited to large quantities of ballots left undelivered and unprotected in apartment building foyers, lobbies and other public places
- Democrats across the State receiving ballots weeks before Republicans
- USPS returning ballots to the voter, instead of to the Board of Elections office
- A disconcertingly high number of rejected ballots
- Democrat ballots sent to Republican voters in Bernardsville; Democratic candidate names printed on Republican ballots
- Republican voters receiving other voters' ballots in Berkeley Heights
- An out of date registered voter database that includes tens of thousands of deceased, moved, or otherwise no longer valid voters, greatly undermining citizens confidence in their elections; ballots still being sent to these former voters
- Statewide voter registration database "keeps crashing"
- Election officials "not confident" the state will be ready for the primary
- State voter database being unable to work for mail in voting
- News reports today of a USPS truck fire in Morris County that would have consumed unnamed and an unknown number of absentee ballots

News reports related to these can be found attached to this letter.

Relatedly, the governor has not ruled out using this same faulty all-mail election scheme for the November General election. This is of great concern, given the larger number of voters, and the potential effects it could have on voters ability to have a say in who represents them on the local, state, and federal level.

Governor Murphy has mismanaged the state's response to Covid-19 and as a result, 1.2M New Jerseyans are out of work, over 6,000 seniors are dead in our nursing homes, and thousands of our businesses are gone forever.

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We are requesting federal monitoring of this election to ensure that voter disenfranchisement is not added to that list of failures.

Thank you in advance.

Respectfully,



Doug Steinhardt  
Chairman, New Jersey Republican State Committee

Copied:

Chief, Voting Section  
Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice  
4 Constitution Square  
Room 8.923  
150 M Street NE  
Washington, DC 20530

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## Three weeks before N.J. primary, state election system keeps crashing

*Motor Vehicle data not integrating with Division of Elections database*

By **David Wildstein**, June 17 2020 8:36 pm

New Jersey's Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) is crashing frequently, terrifying county election officials attempting to meet deadlines for a statewide primary election that will be conducted almost entirely through vote-by-mail ballots.

Five different election officials confirmed to the New Jersey Globe that the state's voter database is not available to them at certain points during business hours because of technology issues the state has been unable to solve.

"There are times we need to access to (the) SVRS and we can't get in because it's down," an election official said. "It's slowing down our ability to be ready for the July 7 primary."

The Globe has learned that the SVRS had faced severe challenges before the coronavirus pandemic, and Gov. **Phil Murphy**'s decision to implement all-VBM municipal elections in May and a nearly-all vote-by-mail primary have further hobbled an already frail system. There have been addition reports of glitches with integrating data collected by the state Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) into the state voter database, leaving some election officers without the ability to properly sent out some Democratic and Republican ballots.

The MVC provides information to the Division of Elections when state residents complete any driver's license transaction, including name and address changes, according to Jim Hooker, the deputy administrator of strategic communications.

"While agencies were closed to the public, we processed about 250,000 license transactions," Hooker said. "In each case that information was automatically provided to the Division of Elections for voter registration unless the individual opted out or was ineligible to vote."

In one case, a voter who changed their name after getting married received a VBM ballot under the old name and not the one on the driver's license.

The agency decided against accepting voter registrations during their limited opening on Monday and Tuesday, but several motor vehicle agents told the Globe that they were never given instructions on how to handle that issue.

It took the MVC more than 30 hours to respond to questions about their acceptance of voter

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registration forms during drop-off and pick-up services that began this week.  
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The Division of Elections did not immediately respond to a 4:21 PM email seeking comment on their technology breakdown.

Officials had complained last month that a software malfunction delayed the mailing of some military and overseas ballots.

The SVRS vendor, KnowInk, has been unable to fix glitches.

The Division of Elections awarded a \$17 million contract in 2013 to maintain the SVRS to Everyone Counts, a company based in LaJolla, California. That company was later acquired by the Cleveland-based Votem Corp.

Votem sold the New Jersey contract to KnowInk.

The new DVRS database was initially scheduled to change over to a new system in 2019 but delays moved changes to 2020.

## Assemblyman's vote among 3,200 voided in messy Paterson City Council elections

Joe Malinconico Published 8:32 a.m. ET May 25, 2020 | Updated 5:20 p.m. ET May 26, 2020

PATERSON – Passaic County officials have released the names of about 3,200 people whose ballots were disqualified in Paterson's controversy-plagued City Council elections – a list that includes Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly as well as various community leaders and their family members.

What election officials have not yet disclosed is exactly why each person's vote was not counted in the results of the six ward council races, which were conducted entirely through vote-by-mail ballots because of the coronavirus crisis.

The reasons for the disqualifications normally are listed on a post-election report regarding mail-in ballots that is issued by the county after every election, officials said. But for some reason, officials said, this year's electronic report was not displaying the explanations for the disqualification. Officials said they expect the problem to be fixed soon.

About 19% of the ballots submitted in the election have been disqualified.

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Wimberly, the Assembly's deputy Speaker, expressed shock on Friday night when Paterson Press informed him that his ballot was among the roughly 3,200 that were not counted in the city's election. The votes cast by his wife and two sons also were disqualified, according to the county's list.

"I mailed them at the downtown post office," said Wimberly. "I will investigate."

Officials say they believe the majority of the disqualified votes stem from problems that routinely arise with mail-in ballots, such as discrepancies between the signatures on the ballots and those on voter registration forms or flaws in the ways the ballots were filled out.

But the non-counted votes also includes more than 800 that the Passaic County Board of Elections decided to set aside and possibly turn over to law enforcement authorities because they allegedly were improperly bundled when mailed. Political insiders say bundling is a sign that candidates' campaigns may be violating state election law.

Federal, state and county authorities all are investigating possible irregularities in the election, according to multiple sources. One losing candidate, long-time councilman William McKoy, already has filed a petition for a recount and others say they are considering doing so as well.

Under the official results released on May 19, a week after Election Day, McKoy was the only incumbent who lost. His defeat by former councilman Alex Mendez in the 3rd Ward race would shift the balance of power on the council against Mayor Andre Sayegh.

The 3rd Ward happened to have the highest number of disqualified ballots – roughly 1,150 votes, or about one out of every four that was submitted, according to various reports released by election officials.

The 2nd Ward has the highest number of disqualifications, with more than 900, followed by the 5th Ward with 480 and the 1st Ward with 350.

County officials say they will notify each voter whose ballot was disqualified. But that had not happened as of Friday, when the names were first made public. Among those on the list were former school board members Eddie Gonzalez and Danilo Inoa, the son of former 1st Ward Councilman James Staton, the brother of 6th Ward councilman Al Abdelaziz and the wife of Passaic County Freeholder Theodore "TJ" Best.

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“I’m very disturbed with this system,” said Staton. “Everybody whose vote didn’t count should contest it.”

Also among those whose votes were disqualified was 91-year-old Tom Fuscaldo, the former president of the Paterson Taxpayers Association and a regular attendee of City Council meetings.

“I’m astounded,” said Fuscaldo, adding that he rarely missed an election since he started voting seven decades ago.

Fuscaldo, like many Patersonians, expressed distrust in the vote-by-mail process. “I tell you, it’s all set up for cheating,” he asserted.

Ernest Rucker, a city activist who has been complaining about alleged mail-in ballot fraud for years, also was on the list of those whose votes were not counted. Rucker said he did not submit a vote in this year’s council election, because he said he never got a ballot in the mail.

Rucker asserted that someone must have illegally turned in his ballot. County election records show the ballot was sent to an address on Market Street.

“I haven’t lived there for six or seven years,” Rucker said.

## One in 10 Ballots Rejected in Last Month’s Vote-by-Mail Elections

COLLEEN O’DEA | JUNE 10, 2020 | **POLITICS**

NJ Spotlight analysis finds that New Jersey election officials did not count ballots for several reasons, often because of issues with signatures

About one in every 10 people who mailed in ballots in last month’s special elections had their votes rejected, which could forebode the potential disenfranchisement of tens of thousands of New Jerseyans in next month’s primaries.

An NJ Spotlight analysis of the vote-by-mail ballots cast in 31 municipalities that held nonpartisan municipal, school board or special elections on May 12 — an entirely mail-in election — found that election officials did not count 9.6% of ballots sent in.

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A database provided by the state Division of Elections shows more than a dozen

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reasons for rejecting ballots. Most commonly, officials did not count ballots because the signature on the ballot did not match the one on file, the ballot arrived too late or the required certificate was not enclosed.

“Ten percent rejected is definitely higher than in the past, significantly higher, but it’s unsurprising,” said Henal Patel, an attorney with the New Jersey Institute of Social Justice, which is asking a U.S. District Court judge to order the state to revise current [signature verification procedures](#) to allow voters to fix any problem with a mail-in ballot so that it can be counted.

The stakes are high: While the presidential primaries are essentially decided, there are [contested primaries](#) in one or both parties for U.S. Sen. Cory Booker’s seat and in 10 of the state’s dozen congressional districts. Two years ago, 700,000 people voted in the 2018 primary election. If that many people choose to vote this year, and half vote by mail, a 10% rejection rate would mean 35,000 individual votes would go uncounted.

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey and NAACP New Jersey State Conference, plaintiffs in the suit, [amended their action last week](#) to include as a plaintiff Shamisa Zvoma, a Montclair woman who court papers say is “outraged and disheartened” after learning her ballot in last month’s tight municipal race was rejected because of an alleged signature mismatch.

Legislation to fix some of the problems?

Patel said mistakes in the May 12 elections were inevitable, given everyone was forced to vote by mail, whether they wanted to or not, and the majority of the public have not previously used a mail-in ballot and were unfamiliar with all the parts of it that need to be properly filled out, signed and returned.

Assemblyman Andrew Zwicker (D-Middlesex) said he has heard from people who have had their votes invalidated and is sponsoring legislation ([A-3591](#)) designed to address some issues related to mail-in ballots. The bill would require the state to provide greater education to voters and seeks to correct at least some issues with ballot rejections by having the Secretary of State give county election officials standards to use in determining whether to accept or reject ballots as well as prohibit the rejection of ballots that were insufficiently sealed due to an envelope’s glue.

“Voting should be straightforward, transparent and verifiable,” said Zwicker, who chairs the Assembly Science, Innovation and Technology Committee. “Our system

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struggles to do that. People will, with every good intention, try to do this right ... but

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to maybe not even find out that their ballot was rejected, they've just assumed it has been accepted. A simply way for a voter to verify that their ballot has been included is imperative.”

The May 12 rejection rate is significantly higher than the 3% rejection rate in the 2018 general election, according to NJ Spotlight’s analysis of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission’s [survey](#) results.

“The high number of rejected ballots in the May municipal elections because of signature issues underscores how vital it is that we provide an opportunity for voters to cure their ballots in time for the primary election,” said Jesse Burns, executive director of the League of Women Voters of New Jersey and one of the plaintiffs in that case.

Asked whether the governor is concerned about the potential disenfranchisement of voters next month, Christine Lee, a spokeswoman for Gov. Phil Murphy, said, “The governor has sought to expand access to voting and ensure that all voters are counted. The Department of State and the Division of Elections are actively pursuing policies and procedures for the July 7<sup>th</sup> Primary Election to ensure fairness and transparency of the voting process.”

## Changes for July 7 primary

In early April, Murphy [postponed the primary](#) that would have been held last Tuesday until July 7 because of concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic; then, he decided in mid-May to conduct the election primarily by mail. Close to 6.2 million registered New Jerseyans are to receive either a ballot — if they are regular Democratic or Republican voters — or an application for a mail-in ballot for all others registered voters, although there will also be at least one polling place open in every municipality for those who prefer to vote in person.

Many saw the May 12 elections as something of a test for how well an election conducted fully with voting by mail would work. The number of issues that arose likely played a role in Murphy’s decision to allow for at least some in-person voting.

In all, at least 11,453 ballots for the May 12 elections were rejected, out of some 119,000 that voters returned. There were particular problems in two municipalities.

A substantial portion of the rejected ballots were in Paterson, related to [allegations of attempted voter fraud](#). The Passaic County Board of Elections decided not to count

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some 800 ballots for city council races after hundreds of ballots were found in bundles

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in mailboxes in Haledon and South Paterson. In total, more than 3,200 ballots cast in Paterson, or 19% of the total, were rejected.

Notable issues in Paterson, Montclair

Removing Paterson from the counts reduces the rejection rate to 8.1%, which is still significantly higher than the rate in 2018.

**Montclair also had many ballots go uncounted** — 1,100. Postal delays played at least some role, according to Renee Baskerville, who lost the mayoral contest by fewer than 200 votes and has filed a lawsuit in Superior Court seeking to have counted all votes that were properly cast. The May 12 elections were conducted under typical vote-by-mail rules, which require a ballot to have been postmarked by Election Day and received no more than 48 hours later to be counted. Due to mail delivery delays related to the coronavirus pandemic, Murphy has changed that for the primary and is allowing ballots to be counted up to a week after the election as long as they are postmarked by Election Day.

Micah Rasmussen, director of the Rebovich Institute for New Jersey Politics at Rider University, said that while rejections are problematic, they also prove that voting by mail does not permit widespread fraud.

“The disqualification of VBM ballots in past elections is definitely a growing pain, and we’ve got to get better at it,” he said. “But I also point to it as an indication of the strong security measures that are in place to ensure fair and accurate elections. As you know, there’s been a recent trend of partisan criticism of VBMs, and what it fails to account for is that there are many steps in the long food chain of a stray VBM application or even a ballot, but there’s only one way for a VBM to be counted, and that’s for every step to be followed correctly. There’s absolutely a risk of not counting votes that don’t check the entire sequence of steps and security measures, but there’s really no other way to safeguard the vote. That’s why voter can have confidence in it.”

Signature verification, a sticking point

Still, the League of Women Voters and NAACP say the state’s signature-verification requirement is unconstitutional because it disenfranchises so many. Election officials are not trained in handwriting analysis to be able to properly determine whether the signature on a ballot matches the one on a voter’s registration, not to mention that a person’s signature can change over time and with age.

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The groups note that New Jersey voters are not informed when a ballot is going to be rejected, nor are they given the opportunity to fix issues that led to a rejection. Sixteen states give voters a chance to prove they had completed and submitted a ballot, in some cases for up to a week after Election Day.

“One thing some all-VBM states have — and I’d like to see us adopt — is an app that lets voters track their ballots once they put them into the mail,” Rasmussen said. “They can follow them through every step until they receive confirmation that they’ve been received and counted.”

Mary Corrigan, a member of the Mercer County Board of Elections, said anyone concerned that their signature has changed can complete and sign a [new voter registration form, available online](#) and check the “Signature Update” box. The voter registration deadline for this year’s primaries is June 16.

Patel said the lawsuit was updated to cover provisional ballots, as well, because anyone who goes to vote in person will have to use a paper ballot and these will also be subject to signature verification.

Murphy’s executive order requiring clerks to send ballots to all active Democratic and Republican voters and a ballot application to all others registered also provides for some in-person voting to be available in recognition, the governor said at the time, that not everyone wants to send in a ballot. But — due to the large numbers of mail-in ballots being sent — there will not be voting machines for use by the public. People will have to cast a provisional ballot that election officials will count after processing all of the mailed-in ballots so they can make sure individuals are not voting twice: once by mail and once in person.

Patel said she is hoping for a federal ruling on the preliminary injunction soon because the primary elections are now less than four weeks away.

As Burns noted, “The timeline is short.”

# NEW JERSEY REPUBLICAN STATE COMMITTEE

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## **New Jersey election officials raise alarms about primary preparedness**

By Matt Friedman

06/17/2020 01:57 PM EDT

New Jersey election officials on Wednesday said they're not confident the state will be ready for the July 7 primary, warning of problems they're already experiencing in advance of the election.

A new statewide voter registration system is not ready for what will be a mostly vote-by-mail election, county election officials said. A promised public education campaign from the state hasn't materialized, said one county clerk, while another warned that results may not be known until weeks after Election Day. Some voiced concern the U.S. Postal Service won't be able to cope with the crush of ballots.

"As I sit here today, I can't say that the clerks have 100 percent confidence that everybody who wants a ballot is getting a ballot," Hunterdon County Clerk Mary Melfi told the Assembly State and Local Government Committee during a two-hour hearing on preparation for the July primary and November general election.

The primary, originally scheduled for June 2, was moved to July 7 because of the coronavirus pandemic. Gov. Phil Murphy mandated that every voter who is registered with a political party receive a mail-in ballot, while unaffiliated voters will receive applications for them. That means roughly 6 million voters will receive either ballots or applications in the mail. At least half of each county's polling places must remain open on Election Day for voters to cast provisional ballots.

Many of the problems have to do with the newly implemented Statewide Voter Registration System, officials said, which was put in place in January, two months before the pandemic hit and forced the state to radically change how it runs elections. The platform is used by all counties to maintain voter registration data.

"The debut of this system certainly did not come without its challenges," said Bergen County Deputy Superintendent of Elections Theresa O'Connor. "No one could certainly envision what would occur less than two months later thanks to COVID-19."

"We ask your patience because these results will not likely be known until several weeks beyond Election Day," O'Connor said.

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Melfi said the system has also created trust issues, with mail-in ballots or applications being sent to people who have died but whose names have not been removed from the system.

“We have had trays and trays coming in of returned ballots, and they’re coming in for various reasons. People have moved. College kids. In some cases they’re deceased,” Melfi said. “And this leads to people posting these ballots on Facebook saying, ‘Look, my father’s been dead for 10 years and he’s still getting ballots,’ which lead the public to not trust the system.”

Alicia D’Alessandro, a spokesperson for the state Division of Elections, said the new voter registration system was put in place in January because “it had to be timed in between elections and needed to be updated before the 2020 general election.”

“The statewide voter registration system is a platform,” D’Alessandro said. “The data that is on that platform has been updated and uploaded by the counties, so if that information is incorrect, that responsibility does not lie with the state.”

Melfi also said 17-year-olds who, under a recent law, are allowed to register to vote ahead of their 18th birthday are getting “lost in the system.”

Several advocates who testified during Wednesday’s committee hearing said the state needs to engage in a large public outreach campaign ahead of the primary. Murphy’s [executive order](#) on how the primary will be conducted called for the secretary of state and county election officials to “facilitate the public’s understanding of the rules governing the July 7, 2020 elections.”

“To date, we have seen no outreach,” said Somerset County Clerk Steve Peter.

Peter said he has run into his own problems with the election. The huge volume of ballots, he said, has required some counties to use vendors to print them. In his county, hundreds of misprinted ballots went to Republican voters with Democratic primary candidates on them.

New Jersey had a small practice run for the primary: the May 12 nonpartisan municipal elections that took place in about three-dozen towns across 10 counties

O’Connor, the Bergen County deputy superintendent of elections, said some workers at the U.S. Postal Service “did not appreciate the significance of the vote-by-mail ballots” in that election.

“In several towns, we saw instances of undelivered ballots left in stacks on the ground, in apartment buildings or outside or on top of mail boxes,” she said.

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Some academics and activists said the state should give voters more opportunities to drop off their mail-in ballots rather than rely on the Postal Service. Murphy's executive order calls for at least five drop boxes in each county.

Monmouth University pollster Patrick Murray called for more.

"If you're going to do mainly vote-by-mail elections, you have to have multiple drop box locations so that voters can easily access those locations and not rely on the U.S. Postal Service to deliver their ballot," Murray said.

Prior to the testimony, the committee approved without opposition a bill, [NJ A3591 \(20R\)](#), that would require county clerks to hang posters at polling places to promote voting by mail, tell voters who receive mail-in ballots how to check their status and give employees of county boards of elections materials on standards to accept and reject ballots.

## Post Office returning completed ballots to voter, not county election office

*Reports of mishaps in most-all vote-by-mail New Jersey primary*

By [David Wildstein](#), June 18 2020 4:58 pm

There are reports that the U.S. Post Office has returned dozens of vote-by-mail ballots cast for the July 7 primary election back to voters, instead of delivering them to the county Board of Elections.

In these cases, voters who have completed their VBM ballot and returned them are finding their own ballots coming back to their homes, according to local election officials.

Postmarked ballots addressed to the county election office are instead being delivered by the post office to the return address of the voter.

The postal service acknowledged the mistakes.

"We are aware that some ballots were inadvertently returned to voters. We have no evidence that these pieces of mail were processed incorrectly. We regret any concern caused by their delay," said Maureen P. Marion a spokesperson for the U.S. Postal Service. "We have continued to process and deliver ballots to voters as they are provided by, or on behalf of, Boards of Elections and are not aware of any widespread delays in advance of the July 7th elections."

This is the latest in a series of postal mishaps involving an election that is being run entirely

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through mail-in ballots  
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In response to the coronavirus pandemic New Jersey switched to all-VBM elections in 33 municipalities across ten counties on May 12, involving about 730,000 voters.

Thousands of ballots were delivered after the May 14 cutoff – hundreds of them postmarked on or before May 12 and hundreds more without any postmark at all, making it impossible for election officials to accept the ballots.

A mostly-VBM primary election moved from June 2 to July 7 will involve at least 4 million voters.

“The U.S. Mail serves as a secure, efficient and effective means for citizens and campaigns to participate in the electoral process, and the Postal Service is committed to delivering Election Mail in a timely manner. We employ a robust and proven process to ensure proper handling of all Election Mail, including ballots. This includes close coordination and partnerships with election officials at the local, county, and state levels. As we anticipate that many voters may choose to use the mail to participate in the upcoming elections due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are conducting and will continue to proactively conduct outreach with state and local election officials and Secretaries of State so that they can make informed decisions and educate the public about what they can expect when using the mail to vote,” Marion said. “As part of these outreach efforts, we will discuss our delivery processes and will consult with election officials about how they can design their mailings in a manner that comport with postal regulations, improve mailpiece visibility, and ensure efficient and cost-effective processing and delivery.”

## **Misprinted ballots with Democratic candidates mailed to Republicans in this N.J. town**

Karen Gardner was perplexed when she received her mail-in primary ballot. As a life-long Republican voter and chairwoman of the Bernardsville Republican Municipal Committee, Gardner wasn't expecting to find a list of Democrats inside the envelope.

“The slate of candidates was all Democrat from Joe Biden down to dogcatcher, but on the upper right it clearly stated it was a Republican ballot and it had my name and correct information on the return envelope,” Gardner said.

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Of the 2,400 registered Republicans in Bernardsville, 500 to 700 of them received erroneous mail-in ballots, listing the Democratic candidates instead of the Republicans.

Gardner brought the issue to the Somerset County Republican Organization on June 13. The organization's chairman Al Gaburo notified the county clerk who promised to remedy the mistake.

The error originated with Reliance Graphics, Inc., the printing company which sent out Somerset County's ballots. Normally, the county clerk's office prepares the ballots themselves, but shopped the task to Reliance this year because of Gov. Phil Murphy's [executive order](#) that every voter receive a vote-by-mail ballot for the delayed July 7 primary election.

"If we had had a greater lead time when we were sending out these ballots, we would have been able to do the ballot insertion in-house and this error would have been caught," Somerset County Clerk Steve Peter said.

Corrected ballots with a slip explaining the error were sent back out to all 2,400 Bernardsville Republicans on June 16. The erroneous ballots will be voided, and even so, Republican voters cannot cast votes for Democrats in a New Jersey primary. Reliance will swallow the reprinting and postage costs, at no added expense to taxpayers, Peter said.

Peter said that there was no issue with the PDF proof Reliance sent over before the ballots were mailed or with the ballots sent to the clerk's office for distribution. Bob Fetterly, the president of Reliance, called it a human error, but would not elaborate on what exactly happened or why the error only affected 500 to 700 Bernardsville Republicans.

"It was a misprint," Fetterly said, whose company serves six New Jersey counties, including Middlesex and Essex. "Human error. We mailed over 1.5 million ballots in the last couple of weeks and 500 went astray. So we apologized for it, but it was a human error... we had a success rate of 99.99 percent."

Bernardsville Republicans are displeased with the mistake and think it will undermine voters' confidence in local elections as well as lose Republican votes in this primary.

There has been widespread anxiety about the 2020 election due to allegations of voter suppression and foreign interference in 2016. The coronavirus has interrupted in-person voting, adding additional strain on elections.

"You can't have printer errors. I think that's a problem" said Bernardsville's Republican Mayor Jane Canose, though she explained that she does not suspect fraud.

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Peter vows that the error will not happen again and that there has never been a problem when the clerk's office handles the ballots.

"Come November, I have implored the governor and everybody in the legislature that I can talk to... that if we do have an all or mainly vote-by-mail election that that decision be made no later than August 1st so that we would have adequate time to prepare these ballots and we can do the insertion in our office to ensure quality control."

## Some ballots not being delivered because computer glitch left off apartment number

*New Statewide Voter Registration System keeps crashing, reports of multiple problems in advance of June 7 New Jersey primary*

By David Wildstein, June 19 2020 3:02 pm

There are reports of a new computer glitch in a new New Jersey's Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) that caused some ballots to not pick up apartment numbers on the mailing label.

That means some voters who live an apartment are not receiving their vote-by-mail ballot because the U.S. Postal Service won't deliver a ballot that doesn't include an apartment number.

This is just the latest in a series of technical problems with the state's new voter database software.

Several election officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, reported dozens of occurrences so far.

The New Jersey Globe reported on Wednesday that the voter registration system has faced frequent crashes that has terrified county election officials seeking to run the state's first primary election conducted mostly through vote-by-mail ballots.

There are reports of malfunctions with integrating data collected by the state Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) into the state voter database, leaving some election officers without the ability to properly sent out some Democratic and Republican ballots.

The Globe reported on Thursday that the post office is mistakenly returning some ballots to the voters who mailed them and not to the county Board of Elections.

The post office has faced criticism in recent months for not delivering ballots directly to an apartment resident's mailbox, but instead leaving them unsorted in postal lobby areas where bulk-rate circulars are left.

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Officials had complained last month that a software malfunction delayed the mailing of some military and overseas ballots.

The SVRS vendor, KnowInk, has been unable to fix glitches.

The Division of Elections awarded a \$17 million contract in 2013 to maintain the SVRS to Everyone Counts, a company based in LaJolla, California. That company was later acquired by the Cleveland-based Votem Corp.

Votem sold the New Jersey contract to KnowInk.

The new DVRS database was initially scheduled to change over to a new system in 2019 but delays moved changes to 2020.

## Computer mistake meant some voters never got their May ballots

*State knew about ballot delivery glitch in April but never fixed it*

By David Wildstein, June 22 2020 9:43 am

Some voters never received ballots for the May 12 municipal election because malfunction with the state's new Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) didn't include the apartment number of voters on the address used in local elections conducted entirely by mail.

Election officials in some of the ten counties reported the glitch to Robert Giles, the director of the state Division of Elections.

"I told him about it," an official said. "I guess he couldn't fix it because it's happening again."

The New Jersey Globe reported last Friday that the same glitch has caused some ballots for the July 7 primary election to be undeliverable.

According to sources, KnowInk, the vendor managing the state voter database, has been unable to fix the problem.

The U.S. Postal Service won't deliver a ballot to an apartment number if it's not included in the address portion of the ballot.

Several election officials reported that returned ballots for the May non-partisan election were returned to the county clerk's office, which gave them time to correct the mistake and mail the corrected ballots out again. Some voters called looking for ballots and were issued replacements.

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But in dozens of cases, the ballots mailed by county clerks in April were not returned by the post office until after Election Day, a move that inadvertently disenfranchised voters from participating in local elections this year.

In those situations, it took the post office weeks to return a piece of mail to the sender that they identified as undeliverable in the first place.

In some places, ballots never reaching voters might have affected the outcome of the election.

Nutley finished in a tie, leaving Joseph Scarpelli and Mauro Tucci to share the mayoralty over the next four years. In Paterson, an incumbent city councilman and his challenger are tied.

The issue with apartment numbers is the latest in a series of early snafus leading into the primarily all vote-by-mail primary election called by Gov. **Phil Murphy** as a way of slowing the spread of the deadly coronavirus.

The Globe reported last week that the voter registration system has faced frequent crashes that has terrified county election officials.

There are reports of malfunctions with integrating data collected by the state Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) into the state voter database, leaving some election officers without the ability to properly send out some Democratic and Republican ballots.

The Globe reported on Thursday that the post office is mistakenly returning some ballots to the voters who mailed them and not to the county Board of Elections.

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Officials had complained last month that a software malfunction delayed the mailing of some military and overseas ballots.

Around 4 million New Jersey voters are expected to receive vote-by-mail ballots for next month's primary.

## Some Morris ballots burned after mail truck catches fire

*Election officials working on plan to replace lost ballots*

By **David Wildstein**, June 22 2020 12:13 pm

A mail truck in Morris Township caught fire on Saturday and some vote-by-mail ballots being delivered to voters were destroyed, the New Jersey Globe has learned.

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The U.S. Postal Service notified Morris County election officials on Monday morning that an undetermined number of ballots were burned.

These were ballots being delivered to voters and not completed ballots on their way to the Board of Elections, although it's not immediately clear if the letter carrier picked up any returned ballots prior to the fire.

Election officials are in the process of determining how to send out replacement ballots. It's not immediately clear if the post office knows exactly which ballots were on the truck.

The postal employee driving the truck was not injured.

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