

Purging Basics

Presented by:

Elizabeth Bolin
*Senior Attorney, Elections
Division*



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

What is Purging?

- Purging is removal of a voter's name from the voter rolls.
- Election Commissioners have the duty and responsibility of removing names of voters who have died, moved away, or become disqualified as electors for any cause and, to register everyone who has duly applied to be registered and has been illegally denied registration.



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Election Commissioners Responsibility

- Election Commissioners make factual determinations as to the qualifications of persons on the voter rolls.
- Purging is done:
 - Upon the death of a voter;
 - When a voter changes their residence out of the county;
 - When a voter is convicted of a disenfranchising crime; and
 - When a voter is declared insane by a court.



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Circuit Clerks' Role in Purging

- Circuit Clerks are statutorily required to attend election commission meetings and furnish the commissioners registration books and pollbooks.
- Mississippi law further requires the clerk to give any assistance needed to the commissioners in revising the list of qualified electors.

Reference: Miss. Code Ann. § 23-15-161



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Determining Residency

- While the Circuit Clerk is required by law to provide assistance to the election commissioners in revising the list of qualified electors, it is the legal duty and responsibility of the commissioners to make the factual determination of an individual's qualifications before his name is lawfully removed from such list.



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Why Purging is Important

- Election Commissioners purge, revise and maintain voter rolls to:
 - Keep voters in the registration books and pollbooks of the precinct they are legally qualified to vote in;
 - Prevent illegal voting;
 - Provide an accurate list of registered voters for jury selection;
 - Assure registration and pollbooks never show more voters registered in a given county than are possible;
 - Purging the voter registration books is required by state and federal law.



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Sources of Information to Purge

- The Election Commission uses all valid sources of information to assist in conducting voter roll maintenance.



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Example of Sources

- Roll of persons convicted of certain crimes;
- Print media;
- List of deceased from State Health Department;



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Examples of Sources

- Notice of registration from another county or state;
- Returned jury summons;
- Information from poll manager;
- Personal knowledge;



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Examples of Sources

- Family member of person in question;
- Court order declaring a voter insane;
- List of disenfranchising convictions
- Statewide Elections Management System (SEMS)
- Confirmation Card



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)

- Purging based upon the change in residence of the voter, must be done in accordance with NVRA, which normally means sending the voter a confirmation card or securing a signed statement from the voter stating the voter has moved out of the county.

Reference: Miss. Code Ann. § 23-15-153
42 U.S.C.S § 1973gg



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Purging Federally Registered Voters

- Federally registered voters are those voters who registered with Federal Registers.
- Federal registration program has ended; follow normal purging guidelines.
- OPM Toll-free number (866) 885-4122.



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Purging Under NVRA Guidelines

- Indicators of possible changes in a voter's status:
 - Voter registration card returned;
 - Any official returned mail (change in precinct location, etc.);
 - Returned jury summons;
 - National Change of Address;



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Research Tools

- Telephone Book;
- City Directory;
- Personal Knowledge;
- Any other means.



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Process on Making Voter Inactive

- Send Confirmation Card to **OLD** address if unable to locate new address.
- If a voter registration card is returned, the voter must be sent a confirmation card.
- May contact voter at **NEW** address or phone number, but card goes to **OLD** address.



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Confirmation Card

- card must be in the form of a postage prepaid and pre-addressed return card
- must be sent by forwardable mail
- confirmation card may be printed from the SEMS system



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Confirmation Card Returned With Correct Information

- If information indicates voter has moved out of the county, voter should be purged from the voter rolls.
- If the information indicates voter has a change of address within the county or name change, the change should be made on voter rolls.
- Mail new voter registration card with corrected information.



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Confirmation Card Not Returned

- Voter becomes inactive and will be purged after two (2) federal elections.
- If voter shows up to vote in an election before they are purged:
 - Allow them to vote an affidavit/provisional ballot, which can be used to correct their address or make a change.
 - Voter must be reactivated
 - Mail new voter registration card



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

Purging Summary

- Purging is vital to promote accurate voter rolls.
- Purging is conducted in accordance with state and federal guidelines.
- Don't forget the mandatory statutory purging dates for Election Commissioners
- Follow NVRA guidelines for change in voters residence.



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State

For Additional Information

CONTACT

Mississippi Secretary of State's Office

Jackson, MS

Elections Hotline (800)829-6786

www.sos.ms.gov



DELBERT HOSEMANN
Secretary of State